

PLANNING FOR YOUTH MINISTRY  
IN THE LARGER CHURCH:  
A CASE STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses how a youth ministry may grow spiritually and numerically without compromising or crushing the life and integrity of the youth leader. The youth leader's character, vision for ministry and ministry context are the foundational issues to such growth, not merely programs and activities. This case study takes place in a church with a membership range of 500-1000.

A leader's personal character is reviewed from the accountability structures of prayer and relationships with others. Vision is addressed as a life-encompassing instruction from God, revealed through personal prayer and study. Finally, the youth leader is guided through a process of analyzing ministry programs considering the God-given vision and the local church context. Instruction is given on how to implement and review possible changes.

Principal insights from the project are that prayer and personal accountability structures are central to leadership development and vision discernment. Furthermore, numerical growth and maturity of the local church youth group are directly linked to a youth leader's submission to God's vision both personally and professionally.

## VITA

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

#### Setting of the Case Study

Life for teenagers grows increasingly more difficult, violent and confusing. Each year over 6,000 teenagers in the United States take their lives.<sup>1</sup> The number of children from divorced homes continues to increase. The jails in our country overflow with teenagers convicted of violent crimes. Gangs have become the family for many teenagers. The United States Justice Department suggests that there are 125,000 to 250,000 gang members across the country.<sup>2</sup> Drug use and teenage pregnancy are also on the rise.<sup>3</sup> There is an increasing concern for children living in all backgrounds: the inner-city, suburban and rural areas of our country.

Today, many groups are responding to the problems our children are facing. The Pope's 1993 visit to Denver focused on youth. Our public schools are responding with school counselors, drug awareness programs and sexuality courses. Various responses are coming from civic and government agencies

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<sup>1</sup> Jerry Johnston, Who's Listening? (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 70-85.

concerned about teenagers. Churches are responding to the needs of their youth and surrounding communities with more and varied programs.

An example of the quantitative response by the church was the 1993 National Youth Workers Convention (NYWC). It was the largest NYWC ever held, with over 2200 youth leaders<sup>4</sup> and youth ministry volunteers from around the country attending. This number does not include the numerous smaller churches around the country who did not attend, indicating that the number of youth leaders is even larger than those actually represented by the NYWC. The youth leader is beginning to have credibility in many communities. Once full-time youth workers were a luxury; today they are becoming a necessity in even the smaller churches.

There is no doubt that the teenage years are full of struggles. Add to this stressful time suicide, violence, drugs and alcohol, and these years can be quite troublesome. Broken homes are as common as two- parent families. Stepfamilies and blended families (half-siblings) are the norm. Often the first question that this youth leader asks is, "Are your parents together?" Ministering to these hurting children and their families can compound a youth worker's already intense situation.

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<sup>4</sup> In this setting and throughout the thesis, the "youth leader" is considered the person in charge of the oversight and leadership of all the components of the youth ministry of the church. "Church leadership" includes the governing body or bodies of a local church.

Some of the most crippling demands of youth ministry come from struggles within the church. The nature of youth ministry revolves around a need to balance fun, excitement and substance. Teenagers are no longer children, yet they are not quite adults. Striking a balance between appealing to the child and appealing to the adult is difficult. American youth culture is stimulated by entertainment. This is seen in the numerous products on the market designed to get and keep a youth's attention. Many well-meaning youth leaders find themselves caught in the trap of having to entertain their teens when they initially began wanting to minister to them.

Entertainment is not the only factor that can cause a youth worker to become sidetracked. Emphasis on the size of a youth group can also cause struggles. Youths, like many adults, enjoy being part of a crowd. Often the determining question for a student contemplating attending an event is, "Who else is going?" Youth leaders are very aware of this. Problems occur when there are not enough peers involved to attract a crowd. This critical-mass issue can drive youth programs to seek numbers over substance.

Numbers are not only important to students, they are also important to parents. Parents know that if a youth group is large, the chances of their child being accepted by the group greatly increase. Parents want their children off the street and involved in a "great" program. Since parents are aware of the

importance of size, the church's leadership is also aware. Pressure becomes intense for the youth leader to attract large numbers. Thus, the distraction of the numbers game can focus a youth ministry on the wrong goals.

Other factors that produce friction in the life of some youth leaders are differences in philosophy. Often, conflicts erupt over what the leadership of the youth ministry and the leadership of the church see as the primary purpose of its youth program. For example, a youth leader can see the main purpose of the youth ministry as reaching un-churched, non-Christian students. The church, on the other hand, may believe the purpose of their youth ministry is to care, to "disciple," or to provide wholesome entertainment for the students within their church. Left unresolved, this difference in philosophy can cause real but undefined tension. The source of the tension is unclear because there has been no definition of the overall purpose of youth ministry within the church. Most of all, this purpose has not been clearly communicated from the church leadership to the youth ministry.

If these struggles are not addressed in the beginning stages of a youth leader's job, before long, the pressures of the youths' lives and the issues of entertainment and youth group size can begin to fatigue the youth leader. If there is the added confusion over the purpose of youth ministry between the youth

leadership and the church leadership, the result can be a short, frustrated life span for the ministry of the youth leader.

Faced with a desire for numerical growth, a youth worker can become absorbed in just running the programs for the increasing number of people. Without a clear vision for ministry, a youth leader can become side-tracked or end up aimlessly planning. Without a clearly understood philosophy of youth ministry, programs can become a black hole sucking all energy into them.

This case study relates to the youth group at one church, The Chapel on the Campus (The Chapel) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The youth leader who preceded this leader regularly worked an eighty-hour week. As a single person, he was free to work such hours. As he and I discussed his heavy schedule, he admitted that he had become somewhat trapped in the entertainment cycle. Considering the above discussion, various observations were made concerning the youth ministry at The Chapel.

The Chapel youth ministry has suffered from at least four general problems. First, the ministry has tended toward programs (entertainment) and not disciple-making (relationships). As stated, part of this imbalance came as a result of the previous youth leader's testimony and priorities. Second, the students come from so many different schools (18 senior and 13 middle schools at present) that providing volunteer leadership for each campus is nearly impossible. Moreover,

some students in The Chapel's youth group are spiritually immature when compared to what they appear capable of being. Many of the students who attend a private Christian school want to present a life that is shaped by God. They have a good background in the Bible and the customs of the church, but lack compassion and a desire to live out the truth that they know.

Many of the pressures expressed have been on-going issues at The Chapel. The Chapel is an independent church started in 1972 after a Billy Graham Crusade in 1970. Over its twenty-three year history there have been various types of volunteer, part-time and full-time salaried youth leaders. Many of the previous youth leaders have become overwhelmed with the amount of activity associated with the youth ministry.<sup>5</sup>

Through the efforts of fine youth leaders and the growth of the church, now 850 adult members, the scope of the youth ministry has also grown. It now includes a pre-teen (5th-6th grades), a junior high (7th-8th grades) and a senior high (9th-12th grades) program. In addition, the Sunday morning Christian education is part of the responsibility of the youth ministry.<sup>6</sup> The Chapel ministry now has two staff persons overseeing the program. A part-time youth leader works with pre-teen and junior high students. A full-time ordained youth leader

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<sup>5</sup> This youth leader has talked with four of the five previous full-time youth leaders in The Chapel's twenty-three year history.

<sup>6</sup> Not all churches have this structure. There are various ways that program responsibilities are divided between youth ministries and other ministries in a church.

works with senior high, leadership training and all other administrative and pastoral duties.

This thesis project seeks to provide an answer to the question, "How can the youth group of a large church be guided to grow both spiritually and numerically?"

### Philosophy of Youth Ministry, Overview

This project will focus on three factors that may affect youth ministry in a larger church. Although there may be other important considerations not addressed here, the assumption is that these three factors are essentially the parameters for youth ministry within any local church. It is also assumed that all three of these factors need to be addressed simultaneously.

#### 1. The Character of a Youth Leader

God's vision is fostered in the heart and mind of the youth leader. A youth leader's character is related to both the reception and implementation of God's vision. The character of the youth leader will permeate all aspects of the youth ministry in the local church.

The pressures youth leaders often face can be an overwhelming challenge to a young person starting a life of ministry. Therefore the youth leader's character comes to bear on all issues related to this project. The biblical examples in whom God reveals his visions are persons of character. Being a leader with integrity is

essential to the implementation of God's vision for ministry. A godly leader needs to seek to understand the vision God has given him or her for the ministry in the local church and needs to seek to build and protect his or her character.

## 2. The Youth Leader's Vision for the Youth Ministry

Youth leaders and volunteers do not operate a ministry without some idea implicitly or explicitly of the function of ministry. As the youth leader prays and seeks God's vision concerning the primary function of ministry, he or she will naturally begin to implement this vision. This vision is the driving force for the youth leader. The leader will have to communicate that vision both to the youth team and the leadership of the church. The youth team is defined as all volunteers and staff helping execute and run the youth ministry. Without such communication, the implementation can be frustrating. Having a clear direction concerning the function of ministry is a crucial part in moving a ministry in the direction of God's vision, but not the only part.

There is also a critical need to have some biblical guidelines for ministry. Without guidelines, the leader will struggle unsuccessfully to establish priorities to accomplish God's purpose in his or her ministry. Once guidelines have been established, the youth leader's understanding of the primary purpose of youth ministry in the local church can be clearly communicated to the youth team. As



God's vision is revealed, the youth team will then be motivated by the leader's vision for ministry and will be well informed.

### 3. Coordinating the Youth Leader's and Church Leadership's Vision of the Primary Function of Youth Ministry within the Overall Church Context

It is essential for the youth leader to communicate with a church's leadership. The church leadership is the governing body of the local church. It could be that this governing body is a complete board of elders or deacons, or it may simply be the senior pastor. If a youth leader does not understand how the church leadership views the primary function of youth ministry, tensions can arise.

Pursuing a vision for the youth ministry without sufficient communication could turn the ministry in a direction that is incompatible with the overall church vision. This results in frustration, hurt feelings, and possibly wasted effort. With sufficient communication, there will be full support of the church body and leadership that will in turn energize and motivate all people involved in the youth ministry program.

This project is written for men and women who are currently in vocational ministry in a local church with a primary responsibility of working with the youth, ages twelve through twenty-one. Furthermore, this thesis project assumes that an area of ministry will, over time, reflect the leader's personality, integrity and vision. Therefore, this thesis project is designed not as a mechanical "strategy" for

executing youth ministry, but as a flexible plan to guide and assist the youth leader in his or her ministry within the local church. Although the thesis is written particularly for youth ministry in a larger church (700-1000 adult members, 150-250 youth), it is hoped that the findings may be of some value to any size church.

### Methodology Overview

This thesis project attempts to do three things. First, the project will provide a tool to help bring focus to the leader's character, vision for ministry and context of ministry. These are the controlling issues for a youth leader's ministry. Second, the project will help the leader analyze the current ministry structure and then provide guidance guide in making changes where programs and priorities are not in line with the new focus. Lastly, the thesis project seeks to help the leader review the changes nine months to a year after they have been initiated.

Concerning the first matter raised above, the minimum time necessary to review and focus the issues concerning the youth leader is approximately three months: a month focused on the leader's character, a month on the leader's vision and a month on the leader's context of ministry. Focusing these areas means seeing them clearly against the backdrop of God's character and his vision for the ministry in the local church context. Obviously achieving such focus may take longer than three months. Concerning the second matter raised above, the time to analyze ministry structures depends upon how closely they currently correspond to

the leader's emerging vision. Concerning the third matter raised above, it is suggested that the ministry structures, once adjusted, be reviewed every nine to twelve months.

### Phase One: Focusing the Youth Leader

#### Focusing the Leader's Character

The youth leader's character and integrity are central to the youth ministry. It is necessary, therefore, to start the project with a focus on the leader's character.

This focus will be limited to two areas. The first area is prayer. It reflects who the leader is before God. The second area is personal relationships of accountability. This reflects who a leader is before human beings. The leader will be asked to respond to questions that will help the leader have a clear picture of his or her character. When analysis is made, the youth leader will then devise an action plan to help in character growth. Guidelines will be given to assist in this process. Finally, the youth leader will be encouraged to consider committing to some activities of God's leading that are out of the leader's area of comfort. These "faith acts" will bring accountability, action and faith together.

Part of focusing the youth ministry will include an exploration of the leader's vision for ministry. This vision is given by God over a time; therefore, a blank time line will be given to the leader. The leader fills out the time line, recording and recognizing the pivotal points that have brought the leader to his or

her current stage of life and ministry. In addition, a prayer guide will be used to facilitate the clarification of God's vision for the leader's ministry.

### Focusing the Leader's View of the Youth Ministry

In a large church, there is usually volunteer assistance in the running of the programs. Sometimes these people consider themselves a team, and other times they act as individuals. While the scope of this project does not include team building *per se*, this part of the project will help bring the volunteers and youth staff together in a more unified effort.

The issues of the project concerning character are to be completed by the youth leader. The issues relating to the vision for the youth ministry are to be addressed by both the youth leader and volunteers. Under the leader's guidance, the volunteers will seek to analyze a biblical framework for youth ministry. The purpose is twofold: first, to clarify and educate; second, to produce ownership. As the volunteers go through the process, they will have increased ownership of the ministry vision. This will help build and motivate the team.

The leader will be encouraged to clearly describe what he or she thinks the primary function of youth ministry is for that church and community. This process allows the leader to own and communicate his or her emerging vision to the team. Comments from the team will add precision to the vision statement and ownership to the team.

### Focusing within the Church Context

Every effort should be made to include and not alienate the church leadership from the youth program. The purpose in this effort is for the youth leader and the volunteers to first understand their philosophy mosaic, then present this to the church leaders. Part of this presentation will include the youth leader's personal vision concerning the ministry.

After hearing the youth leadership's plan, the church leadership will then have the opportunity to make suggestions and comments. As the two leadership bodies (youth and church) give their views concerning the role of youth ministry, a complete vision will be forged and the needed modifications to the ministry can begin.

The project will include a sample questionnaire for the larger church leadership to complete to help them express their views concerning youth ministry.

When subsequent modifications are made by the youth leader, the church leadership will know their suggestions were heard and valued. Such a deliberate submission to the leadership of the church will reduce possible conflict and at the same time clarify God's vision for youth ministry.

Communication within the leadership circles continues until everyone knows and accepts the others' views concerning youth ministry. This process can be short or lengthy. The goal is communication, ownership and clarity concerning

the youth ministry. Once there is unity, a reporting process will be established. This is to insure that church leadership is aware of changes when they occur.

#### Phase Two: Adjustments of the Youth Ministry in Light of Ministry Focus

In review, by this time the youth leader should have a clear understanding of God's vision for the ministry. The leader and volunteers understand and can communicate what they see as the primary function of their youth ministry. The leadership of the church knows and has contributed to that understanding.

At this critical point of the project, the youth leader and volunteers will examine every program, event, and meeting considering the affirmed vision. If there are programs that do not fit into the agreed upon vision of the youth ministry, modification or elimination should be considered by the youth leader. When the changes are determined, an action plan for implementation of the changes follows. Depending on the severity of the changes, others in the body must be considered. The church leadership needs to be updated on a regular basis. This thesis project will provide guidelines to implement an action plan. In the action plan all steps necessary to change or remove the programs will be listed. After the adjustments have been prayed over and made, they should stay in place for one year.

#### Phase Three: Re-Focusing on Program Modifications and Changes

In this step, the program changes made in the previous section are examined for effectiveness and modification. A clear look at the measurable growth and

maturity of the church youth group will be taken. This examination is done by the youth leader, the volunteers and the overall church leadership. The examination will serve two purposes. First, it demands that a certain focus is maintained concerning the action plans originally devised. Second, it involves a set time for the plan to work. It makes previous changes something more than just a passing trend. When all volunteers are involved, it reminds everyone that this is not something new, but a continuation of the mission God has given to the youth ministry.

The youth leader's personal action plan for character development is analyzed in this section and modified as well. The accountability structures that were put in place aid in this analysis. Some guidelines for analysis will be given within the thesis project.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This review of the literature covers the core issue of this project, “character.” Character development is considered from two points of view: the person-to-person aspect (relationships of accountability), the person-to-God aspect (prayer). In personal prayer, a person is before God openly and honestly so that the Holy Spirit can hold him or her accountable. In relationships of accountability, people are holding each other accountable to personal integrity and morality in the ministry. If the youth leader is going to be led by God to serve with integrity, an active prayer life and accountability relationships are essential.

The following materials are divided into three broad divisions relating to the issues of personal prayer and accountability: youth materials, pastoral and leadership materials, and classical works. Under each division, both prayer and relationships of accountability will be addressed. The journals and books produced for youth ministry are broad and numerous. Many of the books are well worn on the shelves of youth leaders. Part of the aim of this review is to select one outstanding book that best addresses the issues being discussed in the thesis: one book from youth ministry materials, one from leadership and pastoral materials,



and one from classical literature. Each of the three chosen books will be reviewed as it relates to the issues of prayer and relationships of accountability.

### Youth Ministry Material

In the past twenty to twenty-five years, a growing supply of publications dealing with youth emerged to meet the demand of youth ministry. These demands escalated after the second world war with the explosion of the birth rate. Jim Rice, in particular, has had a large influence on youth worker resources as editor of the professional journal, Youthworker.<sup>1</sup> Along with this publication are other works from Youth Specialties Publications which Jim Rice was instrumental in forming. While this area of publishing is growing, it is relatively new and seeks to answer immediate needs concerning programming, games and ideas for youth meetings. There is little theological and spiritual writing represented in the youth publications.

Concerning the issues of personal prayer and relationships of accountability, few books discuss them in detail. One outstanding book dealing with personal prayer and accountability as related to the youth leader's character is Paul Borthwick's Feeding Your Forgotten Soul: Spiritual Growth for Youth Workers.<sup>2</sup> This book approaches the issues from a "defensive" point of view.

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<sup>1</sup> Youthworker is a quarterly contemporary journal for youth ministry published by Youth Specialties.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Borthwick, Feeding Your Forgotten Soul (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990).

That is, it seeks to prevent problems rather than pursue a proactive lifestyle seeking to understand God's vision for ministry. Along with Borthwick's work, Youthworker journal in various issues discusses the importance of the youth leader's prayer life and accountability. There is also an increasing number of one-volume works on youth ministry that seek to cover all the aspects from time management and programming to family devotions.<sup>3</sup> Yet, while most of the material published for youth leaders champions the cause of relationships of personal accountability and prayer, few give any concrete suggestions on how to proceed to develop these character traits.

For example, in the 1985 winter issue of Youthworker on "Sexuality," it is clear that the importance of these character issues is known. In a round-table discussion, Bill Brich says, "Our biggest problem, though, is not honesty. It's accountability. All of the people who I know who have ended up in sexual trouble weren't accountable to anybody." After that comment the Youthworker interviewer responds, "This all sounds great, but let's get back to the real world of churches. If we're honest, we have to admit that accountability simply isn't happening. So what do we do about it?"<sup>4</sup> Then, no action steps are provided for the reader.

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<sup>3</sup> See The Complete Book of Youth Ministry by Benson Senter and Mark H. Senter III eds. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1987). Paul Borthwick covers "The Person of the Youth Minister" in chapter six.

<sup>4</sup> "Sexuality," Youthworker (Winter 1985): p. 34. This is from a Youthworker Round Table interview.

Obviously a reprinted interview is not the place to debate and define possible solutions to the problem of relationships of accountability. However, it does illustrate that the character issues of accountability and prayer are discussed as problems in the pages of the youth ministry literature.

Book Review: Feeding Your Forgotten Soul by Paul Borthwick

This book represents most clearly the issues in the thesis project relating to prayer and relationships of personal accountability. As stated earlier, Borthwick writes from a defensive point of view. He states, “This is a book about preventive maintenance.”<sup>5</sup> It is a positive statement. The book was written to help in the prevention of burnout, dropout and moral failure.. Prayer and relationships of accountability, as they are seen in this thesis project, are to be understood as not simply preventive but proactive. It is through prayer and relationships that character is developed and kept in check. As a leader matures, he or she is given a vision from God. While Feeding Your Forgotten Soul is not about vision for ministry, many of the issues discussed are helpful in character development.

In setting the stage for the necessity of the book, Borthwick has a rather comprehensive foundation. The “hurdles to spiritual growth” are most of the hurdles that any youth leader will face. They include: motivation, success, loneliness, learning, lust, and busyness. His discussions of these issues and how to

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<sup>5</sup> Borthwick, Feeding Your Forgotten Soul, p. 18.

deal with them are very well done. Yet, he does not give the reader guidelines for coming up with his own list of “hurdles” that are unique to youth ministry.

Borthwick points out the need for a spiritual workout, quoting Dr. Roberta Hestenes in Leadership Journal: “People are on different spiritual journeys and have different needs and circumstances and temperaments. Therefore, not everyone should do the same spiritual disciplines in the same ways.”<sup>6</sup> Borthwick sees the need for individualized workouts. He then leads the reader through understanding forgiveness as a necessary cleansing step in any spiritual workout. Borthwick also gives a light overview of spiritual disciplines. He includes: scripture reading, personal worship, and service.

In the last section, “Spiritual Growth for the Long Haul,” Borthwick points out that caring for the soul is more than a workout, it is a lifestyle. He says, “Growth is not so much an achieved goal as it is a direction.”<sup>7</sup> In this section he includes some of the hurdles that provide a continuing battle, namely lust, busyness, and success. He counters these with purity, pace and perspective. Finally, there is a discussion on relationships of accountability. This is obviously included in the section on “longevity” because of the support such relationships

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<sup>6</sup> Roberta Hestenes, “Can Spirituality Maturity Be Taught?” Leadership Journal 9 (Fall 1988): 16, quoted in Paul Borthwick, Feeding Your Forgotten Soul (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), p. 74.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 113.

bring. Yet, its brief discussion and the late acknowledgment of it in the flow of the book do not adequately represent its importance in dynamic soul upkeep.

While Feeding Your Forgotten Soul is excellent in covering youth issues, it is rather simplistic. The youth leader desiring more depth concerning prayer and relationships of accountability will more than likely find herself or himself reading pastoral and leadership material.

### Pastoral and Leadership Material

The second broad division in the review of the literature is pastoral and leadership materials. The youth leader will have to approach this larger body of work selectively to find more in-depth reading about the issues of personal prayer and relationships of accountability. This body of work is also growing. Two observations concerning its growth include a leadership crisis in the local church and increased pressures upon the clergy today. Because both of these issues relate to the character and vision for ministry of a pastor, they will be discussed briefly.

As with youth literature, this grouping has books that try to cover an array of pastoral and leadership issues. These books are often written in a “handbook” fashion.<sup>8</sup> In such books, personal prayer and relationships of accountability are usually referred to but, again, not developed in any length. Often they are included

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<sup>8</sup> An example would be Erwin W. Lutzer, Pastor to Pastor (Chicago: Moody Press, 1987). While he suggests many things which are helpful, he does not give a detailed explanation of how to approach the issues and with what priority.

in a list of responsibilities that is almost as staggering as the job description for the pastor-leader. In trying to address all issues relating to the growing demands of pastors, an excess of information is available. This plethora of facts and issues can cause the youth leader to feel frustrated, under-qualified and overwhelmed.

In addition to the many issues addressed, often very little priority is given on how the information is to be processed. For instance, it would be helpful if books about the office of the pastorate would state, "If you do not do anything else, please do the following three things." Instead, there is often merely a huge alphabetized list of issues relating to the role and office of the pastor. It is left to the youth leader to decide which issues need to be addressed and when. Inadvertently, the books have become an overwhelming hindrance. The youth leader seeking help from such books can be doubly confused due to the pastor-specific nature of the literature.

It seems that many emerging leaders in the church, and those in youth work, are lacking some of the basics of character development that previous generations might have enjoyed in America. If this is true, it is all the more important for the materials presented not to assume the reader is grounded in the basics of character. Pastoral literature often assumes that the reader needs to just be re-focused rather than grounded in the basics of pastoral ministry, contemplative prayer and relationships of accountability.

While the demands of pastoral care and especially youth work have grown, so have the areas of literature corresponding to them. Historically, there has been a unifying thread of pastoral responsibilities.<sup>9</sup> Today, depending on locations, many youth workers and pastors may have the same title, but have entirely different jobs based on the demographic, racial and socio-economic issues surrounding their ministry sphere. While this has always been somewhat true, diversity is increasing and the corresponding literature does not seem to adequately allow for the growing divergence in the religious fabric of our country. There is a need not only for a response to this multi-cultural diversity, but for priority to be given to the essentials of pastoral work.

The pastor is faced with an increasing number of roles and continual changes within these roles. “They will be called upon to preach, teach, counsel, counsel, visit the sick, win the lost, provide leadership, and give direction to the flock to which God has sent them.”<sup>10</sup> This list could also include being discipler, worship leader, fund raiser, exemplary parent and outstanding citizen. “Who teaches a person to perform all of those [duties] and the other duties that will be expected of him?”<sup>11</sup> The question is not only who will teach, but what will be taught? What priority will be given to what is taught?

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<sup>9</sup> An example of this is W.H. Griffith Thomas’ work, The Work of the Ministry (London: Hodder and Stoughton, N.D.).

<sup>10</sup> Robert C. Anderson, The Effective Pastor (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), p. xii.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. xii.

Juggling various roles is difficult. Juggling the roles with integrity is even more difficult. The 1988 Spring issue of Leadership Journal dealt entirely with integrity. In an interview of that issue, Gary Dowling states, “I was considered a successful youth leader and teacher. I was trying to live the Christian life as best I understood it, and yet I felt lonely.” After making this statement he shows how he was forced to develop his own relationships of accountability. Then he added, “Recently I spoke at a ministers’ conference, and following one of the sessions, one pastor confessed, ‘You know, I’ve never had a best friend. I’ve been so busy working for the Lord that I’ve never found the time.’”<sup>12</sup> In many ways journals like Leadership Journal can pinpoint the problem; but because of space and time constraints, they do not develop a solution.

A portion of pastoral material espouses the need for accountability to combat a rising integrity problem. In the same journal issue Donald Njaa comments on accountability. He says regarding his appraisal of people, “Does the person distance himself from close peers?” The person who lacks integrity tends to do that.”<sup>13</sup>

Regardless of the source of the declining character, character affects leadership. In Leighton Ford’s Transforming Leadership, Dr. Ford quotes from

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<sup>12</sup> “How Pure Must a Pastor Be?,” Leadership Journal, 9 Spring 1988, Interview with G. Raymond Carlson, Charles Swindoll, Eugene Peterson, and Donald Njaa., p. 41.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 42.



John R. Mott's 1909 book, The Future Leadership of the Church, to answer the question, "Leadership: why now?" He quotes, "[Mott] called for spiritual leaders who should 'have a message and be conscious of a mission,' who should be able 'effectively to express their passion for Christ and people,' and who above all should be 'great in character.'"<sup>14</sup> In both Mott's 1909 work and Ford's 1991 work, character and leadership are addressed together.

Dr. Robert Clinton in The Making of a Leader clearly demonstrates that integrity is directly linked to leadership. Dr. Clinton states that an "integrity check" must be "passed" before God will lead him on to the next stage of development. Clinton says, "The God-given capacity to lead has two parts: giftedness and character. Integrity is the heart of character."<sup>15</sup> The integrity check comes early in the "inner-life growth process," part of a leader's "foundational lessons." Clinton defines the integrity check as "a test that God uses to evaluate intentions in order to shape character. This check is a springboard to an expanded sphere of influence."<sup>16</sup> While there are some books like Dr. Ford's and Dr. Clinton's addressing the need to focus on character as the starting point for effective leadership and pastoral development, more are needed. This is especially true in the spectrum of youth literature.

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<sup>14</sup> John R. Mott, The Future Leadership of the Church (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1909) quoted in Leighton Ford, Transforming Leadership (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1991), p. 20.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Clinton, The Making of a Leader (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1988), p. 58.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Having discussed how the category of pastoral and leadership literature has grown, it is also necessary to briefly discuss how it addresses the character issues at hand, personal prayer and relationships of accountability. As stated earlier, there is a large number of works that make a broad appeal, including the issues of a pastor's prayer life and his or her relationships. This broad way of discussing pastoral issues is limited and not very helpful.

The other way that pastoral issues are addressed is in a format of great detail. Richard Foster's Celebration of Discipline covers many spiritual disciplines in detail.<sup>17</sup> While he includes disciplines other than prayer and spiritual relationships of accountability, his writing does more than describe the need for such practices. He gives a detailed approach on how to develop such disciplines. His book on prayer goes into great detail about the various aspects of prayer.<sup>18</sup> While it covers the issues of prayer, it also has the effect of current handbooks on pastoral ministry, too much to act on.

There seem to be more books available on prayer as a personal discipline than on relationships of accountability (often referred to in the literature as spiritual guides or directors).<sup>19</sup> Thomas Merton's work, Contemplative Prayer, is

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<sup>17</sup> Richard J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988). This work preceded the more philosophical of Dallas Willard, Spirit of Disciplines (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).

<sup>18</sup> Richard J. Foster, Prayer (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992).

<sup>19</sup> While much of the literature sees this as a student-teacher relationship, the definition for this project is one of mutual accountability.

very helpful concerning prayer as a means to search the contents and motives of the heart. His book sums up his goal in prayer by quoting St. Augustine's words, "Noverim te, noverim me," translated, "May I know you, may I know myself."<sup>20</sup> Jacques Ellul's classic work, Prayer and Modern Man, while highly philosophical, is concise in defining real prayer. It is interesting to note that his conclusion for praying in the modern society has less to do with a relationship with the Savior and more to do with the scriptural command.<sup>21</sup>

Kenneth Leech and Tilden Edwards are representative of authors writing on the importance of spiritual relationships of accountability.<sup>22</sup> Both men espouse the importance such relationships have on the stability of a believer. They both see that a function of such relationships is to encourage confession which then opens up the believer's prayer life.<sup>23</sup>

There is, on the one hand, the broad handbook-type approach to addressing character issues. On the other hand, there is a detailed and in-depth approach to dealing with these issues. There are, however, few authors who synthesize these approaches. Two authors who do synthesize practical pastoral issues with the

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas Merton, Contemplative Prayer (New York: Image Books, 1969), p. 34.

<sup>21</sup> Jacques Ellul, Prayer and the Modern Man, translated by C. Edward Hopkins (New York: Seabury Press, 1970), pp. 102-107.

<sup>22</sup> See Kenneth Leech, Soul Friend (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977) and Tilden Edwards Spiritual Friend (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), respectively.

<sup>23</sup> Leech, Soul Friend, pp. 168-169, and Edwards, Spiritual Friend, p. 64.

prayer and relationships of accountability are Henri Nouwen and Eugene Peterson. These authors write from a well of experience, experience that includes an intimate prayer life and relationships that challenge character.<sup>24</sup>

After a lifetime of writing, Nouwen produced a work from within a community for the mentally handicapped, L'Archa, in Toronto. In the Name of Jesus is a small work that pits some current temptations against time-tested spiritual disciplines. Against the temptation of "relevance," Nouwen pits "contemplative prayer." He writes that in contemplative prayer we learn to listen again to God. "Dealing with burning issues without being rooted in a deep personal relationship with God easily leads to divisiveness because, before we know it, our sense of self is caught up in our opinion about a given subject."<sup>25</sup> This is especially true for youth leaders. Over and against the temptation to be "spectacular" Nouwen places "confession and forgiveness." Youth leaders are always faced with the temptation to be spectacular. Yet, there is a great need for confession and forgiveness. This action is set by Nouwen in the context of relationships of accountability. He says, "I am convinced that priests and ministers, especially those who relate to many anguishing people, need a truly safe

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<sup>24</sup> While Nouwen and Peterson are not the only authors, they are representative of those few bringing synthesized material on prayer and accountable relationships. E. M. Bounds, however must be mentioned here as a current author bringing the issue of prayer to the forefront of the pastoral office. While his works are not extensive, they are passionate. See Essentials of Prayer, ed. by Homer W. Hodge, (New York: Revell), 1925, and Power through Prayer (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott), N.D.

<sup>25</sup> Henri J. Nouwen, In the Name of Jesus (New York: Crossroad, 1989), p. 31.

place for themselves. They need a place where they can share their deep pain and struggles . . . with people who can guide them.”<sup>26</sup>

Along with Nouwen, Eugene Peterson does a wonderfully practical job of bringing together the issues of contemplative, personal prayer and relationships of direction and accountability. His many books and articles on prayer, meditation, pastoring and contemplation bring the ideas down to earth for the pastor looking for what to do next. Like Nouwen, his writing is an overflow of his pastoral ministry.

Peterson’s Working the Angles, the second in his pastoral trilogy, lays out the work of the pastor. He sees this work made up of prayer, scripture and spiritual direction.<sup>27</sup> The title “spiritual direction” can mean different things. To Peterson it is clear that his definition includes accountability. He states,

Now I know at least one of the reasons that the old masters recommended a spiritual director and why they insisted that we never grow out of the need for one. It is because of pride, this incredibly devious, alarmingly insidious evil that is so difficult to detect in myself.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>27</sup> Peterson is constantly working on prayer, contemplation and direction in all his writing. The books in the trilogy are: Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), Working the Angles (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1987) and the most recent, Under the Unpredictable Plant (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1992).

<sup>28</sup> Peterson, Working the Angles, p. 119.

Book Review: Under the Unpredictable Plant by Eugene H. Peterson

Under the Unpredictable Plant is an excellent work in pastoral and leadership literature. Peterson's point of approach is to develop vocational holiness and integrity to fight growing "vocational idolatry." It is written to American pastors and, therefore, has some direct applications to youth leaders. Loosely using the Book of Jonah as an expositional guide, Peterson points out, if not attacks, the American tendency to take the vocation of ministry and cheaply turn it into a business of religion.

In raising the need for his book, Peterson points out how poorly leadership is prepared and supervised. He states, "The religious leader is the most untrustworthy of leaders: in no other station do we have so many opportunities for pride, for covetousness, for lust, or so many excellent disguises at hand to keep such ignobility from being found out and called to account."<sup>29</sup> Peterson strikes a chord which draws the reader into considering his or her own untrustworthiness. His statement assures the reader that he or she is guilty at some level of being untrustworthy.

Peterson continues to build his case by asking the reader to examine not only the fleshly temptations, but also the unique cultural temptations of numerical growth and the seduction of the "religious corporate ladder." He shows how his

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<sup>29</sup> Peterson, Under the Unpredictable Plant, p. 15.

own vocational idolatry drove him of the point to resigning. Like many pastors and youth leaders, Peterson realized that he was not about that which wooed him into the ministry. He points out that his prayer life had “atrophied alarmingly.”<sup>30</sup> Prayer for Peterson is not “preventive maintenance,” but is the ministry itself. As his prayer life was going, so was his vision for ministry.

Peterson introduces spiritual training to combat his atrophied spirit. He calls it askesis: “I am using the term *askesis* in its Greek form to get some distance from the popular connotations of asceticism, such as emaciation and deprivation.”<sup>31</sup> He defines it as follows: “*Askesis* is a calculated and deliberate interference with this god-lust, this god-presumption.”<sup>32</sup>

For Peterson his askesis is carried out in what he calls a monastery without walls. His suggestion, like his identification of pastoral idolatry, is broad yet able to be individualized. He suggest a three-fold process of worship with the community, daily praying the Psalms, and “recollected prayer through the hours of the day.” “Ancillary, “ adds Peterson, “to this basic structure are a number of associated acts. These are commonly called ‘disciplines.’”<sup>33</sup> Unlike Foster and Willard’s discussion of disciplines, Peterson gives an over-arching structure on

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

which to place the disciplines. As such, Peterson understands that each unique person has unique issues to be addressed by specific disciplines. He says,

There are popular presentations of the spiritual life that set prayer and worship in a series with the 'disciplines.' This is wrong. It suggests, if not actually invites, a consumer approach to the spiritual life, as if we have all these options placed out on the table from which we can pick and choose according to appetite and whim. The basic Rule of Common worship / Psalms-Prayer / Recollected Prayer is where we start from and return to -- always.<sup>34</sup>

Peterson seeks to give the American pastor his idea of a "monastery without walls." He points out that the disciplines are tools to work the soil. Yet the challenge is to understand the soil and then use the appropriate tool. The "top soil" is the local congregation.<sup>35</sup> As such, the pastor is to work against the "congregation's religion," and this, he points out is done in the context of eschatology. He says regarding eschatology, "Pastoral work devoid of eschatology declines into a court chaplaincy -- sprinkling holy water on consumerist complacency and religious gratification."<sup>36</sup>

Finally, Peterson closes out Under the Unpredictable Plant by painting a clear picture of the ongoing struggle of spiritual growth and vocational holiness.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 107-108. Peterson includes the following disciplines: spiritual reading, spiritual direction, meditation, confession, bodily exercise, fasting, Sabbath-keeping, dream interpretation, retreats, pilgrimage, almsgiving (tithing), journaling, sabbaticals, and small groups.

<sup>35</sup> While he does not say this is a relationship of accountability, in many ways he defines a relationship that helps the pastor stay accountable to God and his calling. Peterson uses the specific title of spiritual director in describing a single relationship of accountability.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 144.



He points the leader to shift from being a program-director pastor to a spiritual director. He defines it as follows: "Spiritual direction is the act of paying attention to God, calling attention to God, being attentive to God in a person or circumstances or situation."<sup>37</sup> Invaluable to youth leaders is having someone who helps them stay on track. This is a relationship of accountability.

This book takes prayer and demonstrates how it is used for character correction in the daily battle against religious idolatry. Prayer is not theoretical; it is practical and necessary. Peterson also demonstrates that fighting the battle over the long haul necessitates a relationship of accountability -- spiritual direction. Peterson's structure is something any pastor or youth leader can use as his or her own. This fact makes the book extremely useful.

There are some authors who are bringing together the issues of prayer and personal accountability in a practical fashion for application. However, the literature is limited in its direct application to youth workers and youth leaders. There is a greater need for the issues of prayer and accountability to be addressed in a way that they can more easily be integrated into the life of a pastor. Somewhere along the way, like Peterson says, they should provide both integration and synthesis. This, however, needs to be tailored to the particulars of youth work.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

In large part, the youth leader must wade into material that is too broad and often without direction when seeking help. Many of the daily tasks a youth leader faces have no connection with some of the tasks of a pastor dealing mostly with adults. Because of this disparity, help is often elusive. Fortunately, many youth publications, magazines, and journals are responding to this growing need for resources tailored to youth ministry.

### Classical Literature

Youth materials and pastoral-leadership materials make up the first two major divisions in the review of the literature. The classics are the third major division to be searched out. This category is not just defined by how old the work is, but also by how often it is referenced by current writers.

The fathers and mothers<sup>38</sup> of the third and fourth century began the monastic life that would produce volumes of great insight concerning prayer. Henri Nouwen's The Way of the Heart is a current adaptation of the "desert fathers'" spirituality.<sup>39</sup> The basic premise of Nouwen's work is from the desert father Abba Arenus: "flee, be silent, pray." The greatest value gained from the Egyptian desert is silence and prayer.

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<sup>38</sup> Justo L. González, The Story of Christianity, 2 vols. (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984), 1:138. González points out that women were monastics from the start of the movement.

<sup>39</sup> Henri Nouwen, The Way of the Heart (New York: Seabury Press, 1981).

Theophan the Recluse (1815-94) would discover the importance of desert solitude 1500 years later. He says, "To pray is to descend with the mind into the heart, and there to stand before the face of the Lord, ever-present, all seeing, within you."<sup>40</sup> He balances this with the statement, "Inner prayer consists of two states, one strenuous, when man himself strives for it, and the other self-impelled, when prayer exists and acts on its own."<sup>41</sup> It was through the solitude of the monastics that they discovered that only through quiet contemplation can the Lord speak to the deep secret sins of the heart. Yet, many of the monastics pursued "strenuous" prayer seeking to establish their own righteousness.

In Evagrius Ponticus' book, PRAKTIKOS, it is obvious that prayer is mixed with asceticism for the removal of sins. In this crucible of self-inflicted pain, Evagrius Ponticus discovers the power of prayer. He says, "Just as sight is the most worthy of senses, so also is prayer the most divine of virtues."<sup>42</sup>

The monastics experienced the great depths of prayer.<sup>43</sup> The monastics explored prayer. Their relationships of accountability were institutional and tied to their order. Because they separated themselves into various camps, there was a

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>41</sup> The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology, compiled by Igumen Chariton of Valamo, translated by E. Kadloubovsky and E.M. Palmer, ed. by Timothy Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), p. 71.

<sup>42</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, PRAKTIKOS, trans. by John E. Bamberger (Spencer Mass.: Cistercian Publications, 1970), p. 79.

<sup>43</sup> St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) is one of the most obvious examples of prayer. A key to her essentials of a life of prayer is detachment. See Teresa of Avila's A Life of Prayer, ed. James M. Houston (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1983), p. 34.

certain accountability automatically built into their way of life. Spiritual directors are mentioned in later writings and even assumed as part of the everyday life of the pastor; accountability, however, is not directly mentioned.<sup>44</sup>

Book Review: Spiritual Exercises by Ignatius of Loyola

In considering the vast number of classical works discussing prayer and relationships of accountability, it is difficult to single out just one work. Spiritual Exercises will be considered for several reasons. Historically, the work's influence is world-wide.<sup>45</sup> Philosophically, Ignatius of Loyola sought, as this thesis project does, to assume a posture (or exercise, as the case may be) whereby God can have more ready access to one's soul and thought life.

Ignatius of Loyola founded The Society of Jesus, an order in the Roman Catholic church. While Martin Luther ushered in the Reformation, Ignatius, along with others, sought to reform the Roman Catholic church from within. Ignatius, like Luther, went through a personal crisis with his own sinfulness.

At that point he came to have much travail with scruples, for, although the general confession he made at Montserrat had been done with great diligence and in writing . . . it still seemed to him that there were some things that he had not confessed.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> See St. Dorotheus of Gaza, in Writings on Spiritual Direction, ed. Jerome M. Neufelder and Mary C. Coelho (New York: Seabury Press, 1982), p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> The version used for the review is Spiritual Exercises: A Literal Translation and a Contemporary Reading translated by Elder Mullan, S.J. with contemporary reading by David L. Fleming, S.J., (St. Louis, Missouri: The Institute for Jesuit Sources, 1978).

<sup>46</sup> Ignatius, Autobiography 3.33-3.24, quoted in, Justo L. González, The Story of Christianity, 2 vols. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 2:116.

Finally, he comes to know the grace of God, for González says, “From that day on, he was free of those scruples, being certain our Lord had wished to free him by His mercy.”<sup>47</sup> While Martin Luther would break away from the Catholic Church, Ignatius would become more devout as a Catholic. In 1540, Pope Paul III gave his formal approval to Ignatius’ new Order, the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), and written work, Spiritual Exercises. This approval was given during the initial and rising threat of Protestantism. The Jesuits became one of the main instruments of the Catholic offensive against Protestantism.

While the widespread influence of the work is historically significant, Spiritual Exercises has in it some motives for character sensitivity similar with those of this thesis project. As with this thesis project, a central desire for the person taking the Spiritual Exercise is to seek God. Ignatius points to this in the opening of the work. He says that Spiritual Exercises are the “way of examining one’s conscience, of meditating, of contemplating, of praying vocally and mentally, and of performing other spiritual actions.”<sup>48</sup>

In addition to a heartfelt desire to be sensitive to God, Ignatius saw the need for accountability. For his thirty-day exercise, Ignatius developed a design for an accountability partner. His concern was that someone be there to hear confession,

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<sup>47</sup> González, The Story of Christianity, 2:116.

<sup>48</sup> Ignatius, Spiritual Exercises, p. 4.

be an objective counselor, and be a spiritual director. The director might have initially been the priest who heard confessions. The design was that a loving person help focus and direct the one taking the Exercises toward God. The director encourages them to “help by suggesting the matter to be considered in prayer, and . . . not to hinder God’s movements in the retreatant by imposing [his or her] own interpretations of Scripture . . . .”<sup>49</sup> For this thesis project, a “spiritual director” is needed who will not be conflicted over theology, but will direct the youth leader to God and what God is doing in his or her life.

Another way that Spiritual Exercises is similar to ideas contained in this thesis project is that it seeks to guide the reader through a time of self-examination. Ignatius writes regarding self-examination, “to look at who I am, lessening myself by examples.”<sup>50</sup> The examples being “all men,” “the Angels and Saints of Paradise,” and “all Creation.” The point is not only to foster self-understanding, but to reveal what God is doing in the life of the person going through the Exercises.<sup>51</sup>

The self-examination in the Exercises, as in the thesis project, is dominated by prayer. Throughout the thirty days of the Exercises, Ignatius encourages prayer

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p.11.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>51</sup> It is interesting to note that there are similarities between Ignatius’ examination and Calvin’s. In each case, the examination can lead to confession and repentance. See Book II, Chapter 1, sections 1-3 in John Calvin, Institutes of Christian Religion translated by Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), p. 210-211.

and meditation. He even encourages the physical position that is most helpful. He says, “if I find what I want kneeling, I will not pass on . . . .”<sup>52</sup> The point is explained in the contemporary reading, “The important aspect of position is found in the criteria whether I can be at ease and yet attentive, reverent yet relaxed.” To stimulate the prayer life, Ignatius suggested meditation upon the ten commandments, deadly sins (pride, anger, envy, lust, gluttony, avarice and sloth), powers of the soul (memory, understanding, and the will), and the bodily senses.<sup>53</sup> All prayer times begin with some type of relaxation. Such prayerful self-examination can only help in character sensitivity and cultivation.

While there are some similarities in the Spiritual Exercises and parts of the thesis project, they are very different in many respects. Identifying these differences will help clarify what the thesis project is not.

Theologically, Spiritual Exercises and this thesis project differ greatly. This difference is most easily explained as a difference in Roman Catholic and Protestant theology. Most importantly, nothing in the thesis project seeks to earn merit before God. While physical and/or spiritual postures might be encouraged in the project for character sensitivity, such postures are in no way to be seen as earning favor before God. It seems that there has arisen in Protestant circles such

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 144-148.

a critical attitude toward any action that might be construed as “earning favor,” that all such actions have been abandoned.

Spiritual Exercises is partially based on scripture.<sup>54</sup> The work as a whole, however, is based more on the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. While this is understandable, it is worth noting that with Papal approbation, the work has become part of the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. Simply stated, while this thesis project seeks to help the youth leader establish a personal action plan for character sensitivity, this plan is in no way to replace daily guidance from the Word of God.

Similarly, this thesis project is not designed to become institutionalized. Spiritual Exercises continues today to be helpful for many Catholics pursuing a devout life. For the Jesuits and many devout retreatants, the Exercises have become a way of life. This project seeks to guide a person in developing structures and postures for character sensitivity that are not for everyone, but deeply personal and apt to change with the seasons of life.

The youth worker, when appealing to classical literature for information and guidance is greeted with a wealth of information. The information has to be sifted through intellectually and theologically to detect the motivations of these

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<sup>54</sup> Most of the Scripture references are for meditative purposes, not theological. Ignatius includes meditations on the incarnation, nativity, Last Supper and Jesus' praying in the garden.



great spiritual fathers. This task is very laborious and often can leave a youth leader confused concerning proper application. As Peterson says regarding seventeenth-century spiritual writings, “It will hardly do, of course, to stubbornly defy the expectations of people and eccentrically go about pastoral work like a seventeenth-century curate, even if the eccentric curate is far more sane than the current clergy.”<sup>55</sup>

As with the pastoral literature, there is a need to take the thoughts and experiences of the church fathers, desert fathers, early monastics and mystics, and synthesize their works for adaptation to the hectic life of contemporary youth leaders and workers. While much of their experience is not germane to current youth ministry, there are some golden treasures within their writings and experiences. If youth leaders could have a monastic moment occasionally throughout the year, they would surely benefit from them.

The amount of literature written for youth leaders directing them to prayer and relationships of accountability is limited and scattered. However, youth leaders should continue to seek out new materials helpful in developing a better and deeper prayer life and relationships of accountability. Youth leaders who allow themselves to be held accountable will grow in character.

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<sup>55</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, The Contemplative Pastor (Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing, 1989), p.68.

In the Bible, the divine literary source, God is seen reaching his people and their leaders through the circumstances of life in order to produce in them the character and personal holiness that he desires. God is constantly molding believers into the image of his Son, who modeled for believers the way of accountability and prayer in his relationship with the heavenly Father. In studying the New Testament it becomes obvious that the ministry of Jesus, like that of God the Father, was not only proclaiming the Kingdom, but building up his followers. In the next chapter, the life of Peter will be examined and studied for biblical support and principles related to the thesis.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY: PETER'S CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND VISION FOR MINISTRY

#### Introduction

When the prophet Samuel was sent to anoint the king of Israel, he focused on the wrong things. When Samuel saw Jesse's tall handsome son Eliab he was sure that Eliab was God's choice. Eliab was not God's choice. The Bible states,

But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'<sup>1</sup>

This chapter seeks to look at the heart of one Apostle, Peter. In his development as one of Jesus' twelve disciples, what were the inward heart issues being dealt with in Peter? As Peter spent time with the Lord Jesus, what were Jesus' concerns for Peter? Peter's development as a disciple of Jesus and as a leader in the early church gives important theological insight for any youth leader seeking character and vision development in ministry.

This theology of ministry will examine how the character of the Apostle Peter was formed and forged. Its organizational structure follows the major outline of the thesis: the character of the youth leader, the vision of that leader,

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel 6-7.

and the ministry context in the local church of the youth leader. This section will look closely at the Apostle Peter's prayer life and his personal accountability structures. Additionally, Peter's vision for ministry will be studied. Particular attention will be paid to how his vision was developed, tried and executed within the scenario of the birth of the Church.

### Peter's Character Shaped and Focused

Peter was called by Jesus into the ministry.<sup>2</sup> He brought with him character traits that were used and transformed by God in establishing the Church. In studying the Scriptures, it is easily noted that Peter was impulsive. He, and not the other disciples, was eager to walk out on the water to Jesus.<sup>3</sup> After the resurrection, the impulsive Simon Peter dressed himself, then swam to see the risen Savior while the others came cautiously by boat.<sup>4</sup> When confronted by kosher Jews, Peter abandoned Gentile eating practices, impulsively bowing to the social pressure of his Jewish friends.

Peter also appeared somewhat impulsively concerned that his actions and sacrifices would not receive their just rewards. After Jesus explained the difficulty of a rich person entering the kingdom, Peter quickly declared, "We have left all we

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<sup>2</sup> Mark 1:17.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 14:29.

<sup>4</sup> John 21:7.

had to follow you!”<sup>5</sup> In the Upper Room, again in his impulsive manner, Peter incorrectly boasted that regardless of how the other disciples might respond to Jesus’ final journey into Jerusalem, he would not “fall away” from following the Christ.<sup>6</sup>

From their first day of meeting, Peter committed himself to the Lord Jesus. Jesus had obviously committed himself to discipling Peter and began to mold and transform Peter’s flawed character. It was this same impulsive person -- Simon Peter, son of John -- that Jesus renamed “Rocky” and gave the responsibility of building His church. The impulsiveness of Peter’s was no hindrance to God’s plan. Thankfully, God does not start with perfect people.

### Peter’s Character Shaped by Prayer

#### Prayer Taught and Demonstrated

Jesus wanted his disciples to be near him so they could watch and learn from him as he taught.<sup>7</sup> When asked, Jesus taught specifically about how the disciples should pray.<sup>8</sup> On these occasions and others like it, Jesus demonstrated how God the Father was to be the center of their prayers. He also taught them that

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<sup>5</sup> Luke 18:28 and Matthew 19:27.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 26:33.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 5:1-2.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 6:5-15, 7:7-11. Jesus taught them this again in a more personal setting with some slight variations in Luke 11:1-13. For the chronology of the events, see Robert L. Thomas and Stanley Gundry, A Harmony of the Gospels (Harper & Row Pub. San Francisco, 1978), p. 178.

prayer was not endless, meaningless verbiage, but refreshing and restorative communion.<sup>9</sup>

Later in his relationship with the Twelve, Jesus taught specifically on the importance of faith and persistence in prayer. They were taught not to quickly abandon prayer, but to faithfully persist because God hears and answers prayer.<sup>10</sup> Whatever Peter's view of prayer before these teaching sessions, he surely learned new things. Peter began to see prayer as not just endless talking, but as a time of solitude and honesty before the Father who knows all needs.<sup>11</sup> The disciples learned that in prayer they must remember that the character of God is merciful and just.<sup>12</sup> Peter and the disciples learned that when they were aligned with the will of God and at peace with one another, their prayers offered in faith would be answered.<sup>13</sup>

Jesus demonstrated that prayer was important in life and ministry. He would often get alone to pray. It was after a night of prayerful solitude that Jesus chose his apostles.<sup>14</sup> As a leader-disciple, Peter regularly saw Jesus leave the

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<sup>9</sup> Compare Jesus' opening comments in Matthew 6:5 with communal nature of his model in verses 9-13.

<sup>10</sup> Luke 18:1-8.

<sup>11</sup> Compare Matthew 6:8.

<sup>12</sup> Luke 18:1-14 in William David Spencer and Aída Besançon Spencer's The Prayer Life of Jesus (New York: University Press of America, 1990), p. 227.

<sup>13</sup> John 15:7. Peter would later teach how love for one another affects how prayers are heard by God. Compare 1 Peter: 3:7.

<sup>14</sup> Compare Luke 6:12.

gathering to be alone and pray. It obviously left an impression on Peter because early in his ministry he led the others in a search for the praying Savior.<sup>15</sup>

After hearing of John's death, Jesus withdrew to be alone. In the same day, after feeding 5000 people, Jesus sent the disciples away and he again withdrew to pray.<sup>16</sup> And again, it was only after private prayer that Jesus asked his disciples, and Peter specifically, who they thought he was.<sup>17</sup> After observing how Jesus withdrew to pray, one of the disciples asked for teaching about prayer.<sup>18</sup> Peter and the disciples watched as Jesus resisted the pressures and temptations of the crowds wanting to make him king; he reinforced his commitment as the Savior<sup>by</sup> staying behind to be alone and probably pray to the Father.<sup>19</sup> Finally, before his crucifixion, some of the disciples saw Jesus praying alone before crossing the Kidron Valley.<sup>20</sup> Jesus even asked the disciples to join his prayer time just before he was taken captive in Gethsemane.<sup>21</sup>

What did the disciples think as daily Jesus wandered off to be alone and pray? Would any of them suggest, knowing what he was doing, that they too should pray? Would Peter make such a suggestion? Did Jesus ever return from a

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<sup>15</sup> Mark 1:36.

<sup>16</sup> Matthew 14:13, 14:23 respectively.

<sup>17</sup> Luke 9:18.

<sup>18</sup> Compare Luke 11:1.

<sup>19</sup> Compare John 6:15 and 6:22.

<sup>20</sup> John 18:1.

<sup>21</sup> Mark 14:32-42.

time of solitude and find the disciples praying, or were they often battling the edge of sleep? It is difficult to guess what the disciples generally, and Peter specifically, learned from Jesus' prayer life. Nevertheless, Peter is the only disciple reprimanded by name in the garden of Gethsemane for sleeping, instead of praying.<sup>22</sup>

### Being with Jesus -- A Prayer Relationship for an Apostle

Jesus openly taught and demonstrated prayer. In addition, Peter's time spent directly with Jesus can also be considered a type of prayer. Peter was with Jesus, the God-man. He was among the privileged who talked, sang, and ate with the Savior. As such, it is plausible that Peter's spending time with Jesus accomplished many of the things that believers accomplish today when they pray. Insight into some of Peter's activities with Jesus, when considered a type of prayer, will give more insight into how Peter's character was molded and formed.

Kenneth Leech in his book, True Prayer, writes, "Prayer is God. It is the movement of God to man, and man to God, the rhythm of encounter and response."<sup>23</sup> Given this definition, prayer for Peter was talking with Jesus. William and Aída Spencer in their book, The Prayer Life of Jesus, write that Jesus' example of prayer is articulated in John 17. They observe that specific prayer

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<sup>22</sup> Mark 14:37. In this account only Peter is questioned by Jesus.

<sup>23</sup> Kenneth Leech, True Prayer (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1980), p. 27.



demonstrates that “to know God to whom we pray is to know Jesus who is teaching us to pray.”<sup>24</sup> Given this, Peter’s conversations with Jesus will be considered prayer-like in the sense that he was getting to know Jesus and talking with God.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, Peter’s developing prayer life will emerge powerfully intact after Jesus’ ascension.

In prayer there is not only the desire for individuals to be with God, but the desire of God to be in communication with his children.<sup>26</sup> This was most certainly true of Jesus with the disciples, and particularly with Peter, James and John. Jesus called the Twelve to be with him.<sup>27</sup> Those times when the Twelve, particularly the inner three, were with Jesus give special insight into what Peter was learning about himself, lessons that could only be learned as Peter spent time interacting with Jesus. Similar lessons about character can only be learned by youth leaders as they spend time with the Savior in prayer and in scripture.

What did Peter learn while being with Jesus? How was his character shaped? Some of the character issues stressed by Peter in his second letter surely resulted from being with Jesus. They included: faith, goodness, knowledge, self-

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<sup>24</sup> William David Spencer and Aida Besançon Spencer, The Prayer Life of Jesus, p. 238.

<sup>25</sup> Jesus indicates in Luke 5:34 that some things would follow naturally after Jesus’ ascension. This would include prayer

<sup>26</sup> The implication of Gen. 3:8 is that walking with the Lord in the cool of the day was not a new experience

<sup>27</sup> Mark 3:13.

control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love.<sup>28</sup> In addition Peter learned the meaning of humility and suffering.<sup>29</sup>

When Peter had the opportunity to go to Jesus, walking on the water, he learned about **faith**. It was “little **faith**” that Jesus points to as the reason for Peter’s sinking.<sup>30</sup> **Goodness**, “God-given power” leading to heroic deeds,<sup>31</sup> was experienced by Peter on the Day of Pentecost after Jesus’ accession. Peter, transformed by the Spirit, preached, bringing many into the kingdom.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, his lack of **self-control** could get in the way. For example, lacking **self-control**, Peter rashly took the sword and cut the High Priest’s ear off to prove his loyalty.<sup>33</sup>

Surely Peter began to learn the importance of **self-control**, but it would take **perseverance** to develop the **self-control** as he followed Christ. Peter’s **perseverance** became resolve as he was reinstated by Jesus from his denial.<sup>34</sup> After Jesus’ accession and the sending of the Holy Spirit, Peter seems to mature greatly. This maturing can be seen in Peter’s **godliness**, his likeness to Christ.

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<sup>28</sup> 2 Peter 1:5-7.

<sup>29</sup> 1 Peter 5:5, and 3:13-4:19 respectively.

<sup>30</sup> Matthew 14:31.

<sup>31</sup> Fritz Rienecher and Cleon L. Rogers, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Books, 1980), p. 769.

<sup>32</sup> Acts 2:14-41.

<sup>33</sup> Mark 14:29 and 14:47.

<sup>34</sup> John 21.

The **godliness** that Peter speaks of in his letters is a **godliness** that affects lifestyle<sup>35</sup>. Peter saw Jesus going away to be alone with the Father so that as the Savior he could stay focused and lead the disciples. Later, following Jesus' example Peter called for the selection of men filled with the Spirit to help with administration so he and the other Apostles could stay focused and spend time in prayer.<sup>36</sup>

Peter saw the power and learned of **love** as he walked with and watched Jesus. Possibly one of the most personal expressions of love that Jesus showed to Peter was when he healed Peter's mother-in-law very early in their relationship.<sup>37</sup> Finally, Peter came to better understand the **suffering** of Jesus as he himself **suffered** during the early days of the Church and finally in his own painful death.<sup>38</sup> Peter's understanding of **humility** will be discussed more in addressing Peter's accountability relationships.

#### Peter and Prayer after the Ascension

It is not until after the Ascension of Jesus that the prayer life of Peter emerges in Scripture. Peter, as the leader, leads the group in prayer for an Apostle

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<sup>35</sup> Werner Foerster Munster, "ευσεβης," Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament 10 vols., translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 1979), VII:184.

<sup>36</sup> Acts 6:1-8.

<sup>37</sup> Luke 4:38-39.

<sup>38</sup> Acts 4:1-31 and John 21:18-19, where Jesus predicts Peter's death.

to replace Judas.<sup>39</sup> After their release from jail, Peter and John and “their own people” pray in one voice and the earth shook.<sup>40</sup>

In Acts, chapter six, leaders of the emerging church had to deal with the growing numbers of believers. Distracted from their primary responsibilities, the situation demanded action. The duty of caring for the widows was keeping the Twelve from the ministry of the Word and prayer. All had seen how Jesus took time in prayer, regardless of the demands. Would they do the same? The disciples followed the example set before them. They delegated some of their responsibilities so that they could be about the ministry of the Word and prayer. This decision was not only accepted by the Twelve, but backed by the other disciples. As leaders they understood that they not only needed to be serving the Word of God to the new converts, but also needed to be feeding themselves in prayer.<sup>41</sup>

Peter continued to grow in the discipline of prayer. While still a young apostle, he was puzzled when he and the disciples could not drive out a demon. As a maturing leader in the church, he sent everyone out of a dead woman’s room, prayed, and raised her from the dead.<sup>42</sup> Jesus said that some faith-healing and

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<sup>39</sup> Acts 1:15, 23-26.

<sup>40</sup> Acts 4:31.

<sup>41</sup> Acts 6:1-7.

<sup>42</sup> Compare Mark 9:28 and Acts 9:40.

exorcism would only occur by prayer. Peter followed Jesus' example and instructions.

It is important to note that the visions which expanded and increased Peter's view of his commission from the Lord came during a time of prayer.<sup>43</sup> This is further developed in the theology of ministry relating to Peter's vision for ministry. Spending time with Jesus in conversation and interaction molded Peter's character. Peter walked with Jesus and then talked to him in prayer after the Ascension. Without this interaction, Peter could not have fully developed as an Apostle.

#### Peter's Character Shaped by Relationships of Accountability

For an Apostle, spending time with Jesus was both a form of prayer and an accountability relationship. Through prayer believers today can be held accountable in their own hearts by God. Accountability, however, has a different feel when it can be looked in the eyes. Peter had in Jesus a unique divine-human accountability relationship. While believers today can experience the divine aspect in prayer with the Holy Spirit, we cannot experience the human, as Peter did.

#### John: A Lifelong Friend

Jesus was not Peter's only relationship of accountability. From the Bible , we can derive that Peter had relationships of accountability with John, Paul, and

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<sup>43</sup> Acts 10:9.

James, the Lord's half-brother. W.H. Taylor in his book, Peter the Apostle, states, "Peter was a leader, John was a lover. Peter was ready to die for Christ, John to die with Christ."<sup>44</sup> John was a follower of John the Baptist and met Jesus before Peter. Jesus sent them ahead together to make preparations for the Passover.<sup>45</sup> They would be forged into a ministry team after Jesus' Ascension.<sup>46</sup> Their relationship as fishermen together before meeting Jesus was a foundation to their lifelong friendship.

From the start of his relationship with Jesus, it appears Peter envied John's special love for the Master. Even with all of their common experiences and close friendships, there seems to have been some struggle within Peter about John's close relationship with Jesus. The tension intensified over the concern for being the greatest disciple. On one occasion, prompted by their mother, James and John asked to sit on Jesus' right and left side.<sup>47</sup> They asked for the places of honor and prestige.<sup>48</sup> While it was James and John who asked the question, Jesus prayed for Peter. As a bystander in one such discussion, Peter's pride was apparently being tempted by the devil. Jesus prayed that Satan would not have his way.<sup>49</sup> Peter

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<sup>44</sup> W.M. Taylor, Peter the Apostle, pp. 168-69, quoted in W.H. Griffith Thomas, The Apostle Peter (London: The Religious Tract Society Publishing, 1910), p. 125.

<sup>45</sup> Luke 22:8.

<sup>46</sup> Acts 3:1 and 4:1.

<sup>47</sup> Matthew 20:20-28.

<sup>48</sup> Mark 10:35-45.

<sup>49</sup> Luke 22:32.

then impulsively proclaimed that he deserved the honored spot on Jesus' side because he was willing to go to prison with Jesus and be a martyr for the cause.<sup>50</sup>

Late in John's life, looking back on his time with Peter after Jesus' resurrection, he would gently record in his gospel the story of Peter's reinstatement to service. Peter, after the death and resurrection of the Master, led the disciples back out to fish. Had Peter lost all hope in the promises of the Messiah? It was John who first recognized Jesus at the shoreline. John quickly told Peter that it was the risen Lord on the shore.<sup>51</sup> In Peter's excitement, or to make up for the fact that he did not first recognize the Savior, Peter began swimming toward Jesus. John also records in that account that Peter was bothered by John's relationship with Christ.<sup>52</sup> Peter asked about John at his reinstatement, saying, "What about him?"<sup>53</sup> It appears in all this that Peter was not confident in his appointed role as leader when it came to John's relationship to Jesus.

While John's intimate relationship with Jesus was something that might have intimidated Peter, Peter's relationship and partnership with John would last. Having fished together and been sent out together by Jesus, John and Peter were inseparably bound in friendship and ministry. John secured access to the house of

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<sup>50</sup> Compare Luke 22:31-33 with Mark 10:35-45.

<sup>51</sup> John 21:7.

<sup>52</sup> John 21:21.

<sup>53</sup> John 22:21.

Caiaphas for Peter.<sup>54</sup> While John reached the empty tomb first, Peter was first to enter.<sup>55</sup> In Acts, John is only mentioned on three occasions and all with Peter.<sup>56</sup> This relationship was surely one of friendship and accountability because of the length and depth of its duration. Going through persecution, imprisonment and interrogation as fellow leaders forges a friendship of accountability.

#### Paul: A Confrontational Relationship

Peter met Paul when Paul sought him out as the leader of the Church.<sup>57</sup> Paul visited with Peter for fifteen days. This visit, along with Paul's unique apostleship, gave the men a strong basis for a relationship. When Paul witnessed Peter's hypocritical actions in Antioch, Paul confronted him.<sup>58</sup> Their relationship from the start was one of accountability. Peter eagerly came to the defense of Paul's personal calling and vision before the Apostles at the Council of Jerusalem.<sup>59</sup> Peter's declaration before the gathered council that salvation is by the grace of our Lord Jesus was followed by Paul's testimony of miraculous signs and wonders among the Gentiles.<sup>60</sup> At that council meeting any tension still existing

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<sup>54</sup> John 18:15.

<sup>55</sup> John 20:3.

<sup>56</sup> Acts 3:1-10; 4:1-22; cf. 4:17-42 and 8:14-25.

<sup>57</sup> Galatians 1:18.

<sup>58</sup> Galatians 2:11.

<sup>59</sup> Acts 15:1-5.

<sup>60</sup> Acts 15:12.



because of Paul's confrontation was dismissed as the men came together on the Gentile issue.

While Peter and Paul's relationship might have been more limited than Peter and John's, it is strong in the mutual commitment to work on the expansion of the kingdom. This mutual commitment was the driving force of their accountability which continued to grow. In the tasks of leading the church not only to the Jews, but to the Gentiles, God would use an accountability relationship with Paul to hold Peter accountable.

#### James: A Relationship of Respect

James, the half-brother of the Lord, is mentioned in a list of names with Peter in only one verse, Galatians 2:9. In this reference, the two men are listed with John as, "James, Peter, and John." This is the only list of Apostles in which Peter's name is not listed first. Of the inner three, only Peter and John were left at the time of writing the letter to the Galatians. John's brother James was dead.<sup>61</sup> James, the half-brother of Jesus, became the recognized leader of the Jerusalem church.<sup>62</sup> Was James mentioned first out of respect for his relation to Jesus, even though it was understood (even by Paul) that Peter was the "Rock," and lead Apostle? It is also interesting to note that upon Peter's miraculous escape from

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<sup>61</sup> Acts 12:2.

<sup>62</sup> Acts 12:7, 15:13; 21:18.

prison, he told his friends, “Tell James and the brothers about this.”<sup>63</sup> This exchange shows that James and Peter had some sort of relationship.

More insight is gained into Peter’s relationship with James by how James defended Peter at the Council of Jerusalem. James reminded the Council how Peter had taught them about the Gentiles’ salvation.<sup>64</sup> Even though there is very little said about their relationship, these comments support Peter and James’ mutual respect for one another’s positions in the emerging Church. The obvious respect shown by each to the other demonstrates a level of accountability.

#### Jesus: A Relationship with the Messiah

Peter’s relationship with Jesus was obviously special. As the appointed leader, Peter needed to be accountable to the Master. Being in the inner three, Peter would see and learn things that the other Apostles could not see and learn. Because of his access to Jesus, Peter was surely responsible for more tasks than the other disciples. Jesus held Peter accountable for personal humility, honesty and trust. In grace and mercy, Jesus’ relationship with Peter would keep re-defining Peter’s character.

Peter learned the character trait of humility repeatedly. He was the eager one to test Jesus by walking on the water.<sup>65</sup> In doing so, he learned that only

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<sup>63</sup> Acts 12:17.

<sup>64</sup> Acts 15:14-18.

<sup>65</sup> Matthew 14:48.

through faith in Jesus could he accomplish those things Christ would call him to do. Jesus modeled humility for Peter by washing Peter's feet and commanding the Apostle to do the same.<sup>66</sup> The impulsive Apostle, regardless of his motive, would again learn humility when Jesus intervened in Peter's attack of the High Priest.<sup>67</sup>

Peter also learned to trust. When amidst a pressing crowd, Jesus healed a bleeding woman and asked, "Who touched me?" Peter initially sided with the crowd's denial saying, "Master, the people are crowding and pressed against you."<sup>68</sup> Peter would learn to implicitly trust the words of his Master.

While Peter was "the leader," he learned to look honestly at himself. Accountability relationships force one to look honestly within one's heart and soul. Peter's self-reliance was clearly revealed when he jumped onto the water, sure that he had the ability within himself to walk on the water. The rescuing Master clearly showed him his failure to understand the larger picture.<sup>69</sup> Peter might have thought that being inquisitive and assertive showed greater strength than just sitting back and observing. Yet Jesus' response was, "Are you all still so dull?" This comment put Peter back in with the rest of the Apostles, a commoner.<sup>70</sup> When Peter boldly announced that regardless of the other disciples' actions he

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<sup>66</sup> John 13:7-17.

<sup>67</sup> Matthew 26:52.

<sup>68</sup> Luke 8:45-50.

<sup>69</sup> Matthew 14:28-33.

<sup>70</sup> Matthew 15:15.

would never fall away, he set himself up for a weeping self-examination.<sup>71</sup> Signs of honesty in Peter's life began to appear after Jesus' death and resurrection. Peter told the Lord during his re-instatement that he loved him, not as he might, but as he could.<sup>72</sup>

Peter learned accountability as a leader. Jesus brought Peter, James and John to watch and pray while he agonized over his pending death. When he returned, only Peter was asked why the three were sleeping.<sup>73</sup>

#### Conclusions Regarding Character Development through Prayer and Accountability

Jesus' example of prayer was not just for Peter in the first century but for contemporary believers as well. Today we access his example through the Scriptures. The most outstanding example of prayer from the leader-disciple's life is the actual time he was with Jesus. This time was essential to keeping his character growing and developing. Interaction with Jesus, first face to face and later in prayer, kept Peter maturing as the leader of the Apostles and the emerging church. In the first half of the book of Acts, his prayer life not only developed his character, but also expanded his vision.

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<sup>71</sup> Luke 22:33-34; 54-62.

<sup>72</sup> This is seen with John's use of the words αγαπω and φιλω in John 21.

<sup>73</sup> Matthew 26:40.

There is no stated “accountability partner” for Peter in the New Testament. Yet, the Lord Jesus’ life with Peter, and his similar influence upon the other Apostles and disciples, formed a pattern of accountability. To a lesser degree (except in the case of Paul), Peter’s relationships with the other Apostles and leaders in the early Church all helped him to be accountable to his calling and vision for ministry.

### Peter’s Vision for Ministry Clarified and Focused

#### The Development of the Vision

Through being with Jesus, either face to face or in prayer, a vision for ministry is developed. In Peter’s life there were many points where his understanding of God’s kingdom and kingdom ways was challenged. These experiences forced him to rethink his assumptions about the Messiah, his participation with the Christ in the kingdom of God, and the King’s rule on earth.

#### Vision Clarified: A Changed Identity

Jesus said to Peter, “You will be called Cephas!”<sup>74</sup> Confusion over a position title and position responsibilities is one that many people face in the corporate as well as the church world. Jesus renamed Peter the first time he saw him. It is impossible to guess what that meant to Peter. Peter may have compared his name change to Abraham’s. Abraham’s name changed because of his

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<sup>74</sup> John 1:42.

covenant with God.<sup>75</sup> Could this new name change given by the Messiah to Peter be some type of covenant? What did Jesus mean by Cephas -- the Rock? Peter was the only one of the disciples whom Jesus renamed. Peter might have thought that he was being singled out for glory. Throughout Peter's life, he would learn that Jesus' form of leadership was drastically different from the world's.<sup>76</sup> Jesus' leadership meant serving, not ruling.

Was the name change from Simon to Peter a call to greatness in his mind? If so, he quickly learned that it was not through a name change, but the painful process of humility and suffering, that Peter's true leadership would emerge.

From the start, it appears that Peter was aware that he was singled out from the others. Maybe it was because he was a leading fisherman. Having witnessed the Messiah's turning water into wine and clearing the temple, Peter's understanding of Jesus' mission was growing. John records that Jesus' disciples were baptizing.<sup>77</sup> Was Peter the Rock to lead the way in the daily tasks of identifying new followers with the Messiah through baptism? Was Peter a type of right-hand individual for Jesus' tasks, or would God give him a unique ministry? Unknowingly, Peter was being exposed to the far-reaching aspects of following

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<sup>75</sup> Genesis 11:27.

<sup>76</sup> Matthew 20:25.

<sup>77</sup> John 3:22.

Jesus as he saw the Messiah cross racial, gender, and political lines to make himself known.<sup>78</sup>

### Vision Clarified: A New Mission

Jesus said to Peter and the disciples, “Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”<sup>79</sup> If Jesus’ initial comments to Peter were based upon his leadership ability as a fisherman, his first challenge played upon Peter’s (as well as Andrew, James and John’s) background in fishing. After the Samaritans’ testimony, “We know that this man really is the Savior of the world,”<sup>80</sup> the challenge to be fishers of individuals must have begun to make some sense to Peter. Jesus taught that “catching individuals” for the kingdom had more to do with having them believe in him rather than rule with him. Believing in Jesus begins with believing that he is the “Christ, the Son of God,” and by believing this truth people have life in his name.<sup>81</sup> Peter was beginning to understand that “catching individuals” was building “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.”<sup>82</sup>

The Messiah was the master at fishing for people. While Peter might have been the best fisherman among the disciples, fishing for people would require total

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<sup>78</sup> John 4:1-42. For a chronology of events see Thomas and Gundry, A Harmony of the Gospels, pp. 38-39.

<sup>79</sup> Mark 1:17.

<sup>80</sup> John 4:42.

<sup>81</sup> John 20:31.

<sup>82</sup> 1 Peter 2:9a.

dependence upon the Master. When Jesus asked Simon to “Put out in deep water and let down the nets for a catch,” Peter complied reluctantly, saying, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything.” After the net-breaking catch, Peter repented of his reluctance. He went on to become a fisher of people and left everything behind in dependence upon Jesus.<sup>83</sup>

Fishing for men and women did not subordinate them to Peter, but to Christ. Peter was awakened to the fact that the Messiah had come for the sick. Jesus said, “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”<sup>84</sup> His understanding of the far-reaching influence of the Good News continued to grow. Maybe he finally grasped that the influence of the gospel of Jesus Christ would be worldwide.

#### Vision Fostered through Time with Jesus

Jesus communicated his vision for ministry through his relationship with Peter and the disciples. “He appointed twelve . . . that they might be with him.”<sup>85</sup> Peter was first called, challenged to fish for souls, and then his vision was consecrated. Peter’s growing vision for ministry became focused on the character of Christ. Jesus took the apostles and taught them the character issues related to being a disciple. They were to be “poor in spirit, meek, merciful, pure in heart,

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<sup>83</sup> Luke 5:4-11.

<sup>84</sup> Mark 2:17.

<sup>85</sup> Mark 3:14.



peacemakers and willing to be persecuted.”<sup>86</sup> The fishers of women and men are to be set apart in their character. Jesus taught about the character issues and then demonstrated these issues openly for his disciples.<sup>87</sup> This two-step pedagogical exercise would be followed by a sending-out field exercise.<sup>88</sup>

Luke’s gospel records that Jesus teaches on the character and spiritual traits of the disciples,<sup>89</sup> but obviously for a broader audience than the Twelve. Matthew’s gospel records a more detailed account of this teaching directed to only the Twelve. Both gospels, however, direct the disciples to tend to their own spiritual needs before reaching out to the spiritual needs of others. They were to desire God’s righteousness rather than seek their own.

Jesus seeks to establish and define the inward identity of a disciple before commissioning him or her with a vision for ministry.<sup>90</sup> An accurate understanding of the character traits that buttress and are a foundation for discipleship precedes the imparting of vision for ministry. Peter and the disciples were learning this.

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<sup>86</sup> Collectively represented in Luke 6:17-49 and Matthew 5:3-12.

<sup>87</sup> The character issues of a disciple are taught in Luke 6:17-49, then demonstrated by Jesus in 7:1-35.

<sup>88</sup> The two-step teaching is in Luke, chapters 6-8, and the field exercise is in Luke, chapter 10.

<sup>89</sup> Luke 6:17-22.

<sup>90</sup> The believer’s identity is central in Paul’s letters. In Ephesians, for example, Paul seeks to clearly establish identity in Christ (Chapters 1-3) before exhortations are given (chapters 4-6). Paul demonstrates this again with Jesus in Philippians 2:6-11. Jesus’ identity is clarified before his actions are explained. Christians need to understand that the source of power for a life in Christ is not themselves, but Christ in them.

After teaching on these issues, Luke records how Jesus then demonstrated his character. Setting out with the power to perform miracles, while welcoming rejection by the nation of Israel required character. Jesus demonstrated gracious authority in accepting the Gentile Centurion's faith.<sup>91</sup> He demonstrated hopeful compassion in caring for the Jewish widow's deceased son.<sup>92</sup> Jesus patiently supported John the Baptist's doubts. Because of his pure heart, Jesus could handle rejection from the condemning Pharisees and experts in the law.<sup>93</sup> While these recorded actions by Jesus are rarely singled out as examples of character, they nevertheless give insight into the character of the Savior. It was this example of character that Jesus knew his disciples would need to follow before he would impart to them a vision of ministry. Jesus' life with the disciples was an apprenticeship. During their time together Jesus would not only develop their character but also clarify their vision.

#### Vision: Experience and Authority

Jesus' total dependence upon the Father demonstrated for Peter the source of all vision for ministry. Jesus "called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority,"<sup>94</sup> and later "he sent the 72."<sup>95</sup> Peter, the Rock, the head of the twelve

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<sup>91</sup> Luke 7:1-10.

<sup>92</sup> Luke 7:11-17.

<sup>93</sup> Luke 7:18-23, 29-35.

<sup>94</sup> Matthew 10:1.

was to “Go to the lost sheep of Israel.” His role was becoming clear. How he lived out that role, however, was still being developed. The Apostles were to preach “the kingdom is near.” They were to “heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, [and] drive out demons.”<sup>96</sup> Peter had seen how the Messiah reached out to the Gentiles through the Centurion’s servant. The Messiah was the Jews’ Messiah, but this understanding expanded after the Ascension of Jesus. Peter and the disciples’ commission to the “lost sheep of Israel” was not seen as appealing to a select group. The disciples were not only given a specific group and message but specific instructions regarding how this ministry vignette would be played. Matthew’s account of sending the Twelve includes prophecy related to further physical persecution.<sup>97</sup> Luke’s account of the 72 reveals some of the spiritual struggles associated with proclaiming the kingdom.

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<sup>95</sup> Luke 10:1. While this account is a different sending than that mentioned in Matthew 10:1, it is included with the former because they both include the Twelve disciples and are examples of Peter being thrust into ministry.

<sup>96</sup> Matthew 10:6-8. It is not the intent of this project to discuss theological and dispensational issues concerning the Apostles commissioning to the Jews first. It does, however, explain Peter’s dilemma concerning the expansion of the Gospel after the Messiah’s rejection by the nation of Israel. Peter was faced with understanding an unfolding vision for ministry in a larger ministry context and dispensation. After the Messiah’s rejection, Peter was forced to earnestly seek how his personal vision for ministry had changed. The “mystery” (Ephesians. 3:3-6) of Jews and Gentiles being heirs together forced Peter adapt his beliefs. This adaptation process will be discussed as an example of a personal vision of a leader having to fit into a larger vision context. It will not, however, be addressed from the various dispensational and theological aspects.

<sup>97</sup> Matthew 10:21-23.

In these commissions by the Lord, Peter's vision for ministry and his personal vision continued to emerge.<sup>98</sup> Initially, the mission was broadened to include more than just the Twelve. It was then authenticated by the authority that the Lord Jesus gave to those He sent. It quickly became evident that this ministry would receive persecution. Peter's identity and security in his salvation was an essential part of his motivation. Yet, it was still unclear what Peter's particular role as the "Rock" would be.

### Vision Focused

Jesus said, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."<sup>99</sup> Part of Peter's personal vision for ministry was given to him after his confession of Jesus as the Christ. Jesus said after Peter's confession, "Upon this rock I will build my church . . . ."<sup>100</sup> Peter understood that he had been given a special "vision" or insight into what the Father in heaven was doing.

Peter's role in the establishment of the Church finally became clear on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus did say, "I *will* build." Did Peter understand that this was

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<sup>98</sup> While the observations regarding vision are general and drawn from the life of all the disciples, this is the recorded context of Peter's life. The youth leader will have to also draw on life experiences to observe how God is molding his or her vision for ministry.

<sup>99</sup> Matthew 16:19.

<sup>100</sup> Matthew 6:13-20. Dr. Ryrie states that "Jesus is the Christ" is the truth that is the foundation upon which the Church is built, not Peter the person. He continues, ". . . Christ used *petra* ('upon this rock'), a feminine form for 'rock,' not the name [Peter]." See Charles C. Ryrie, The Ryrie Study Bible, New International Version (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1986), p. 1341.

yet to come? On the Day of Pentecost, Peter opened the “door” of salvation to the Jews. He later used the keys to “open” the door of salvation to the Gentiles in the vision at the house of Cornelius.<sup>101</sup>

### Vision Forged in Failure

Jesus re-commissioned Peter after Peter’s denial with the request, “Feed my sheep.”<sup>102</sup> Before the unfolding of Peter’s vision, he was faced with a refining experience. He denied the Lord Jesus and had to be re-instated into his role as Peter, holder of the keys of the kingdom. Faced with the fact that Jesus would needlessly suffer and die, Peter impulsively assured the Master that he was more committed than the others. During the last days of Jesus’ life Peter said, “I will lay down my life for you.”<sup>103</sup> Then at the Passover feast before Jesus’ betrayal, Peter again proclaimed, “Even if all fall away, I will not.”<sup>104</sup>

Peter’s vision of a suffering Messiah was unclear at this point or simply non-existent. Maybe his enthusiasm at being the Rock, having the keys to heaven, and knowing the Messiah-identity of Jesus were fogging his vision. Peter seemingly did not understand that his ministry would be to serve rather than to rule. When Jesus tried to wash his feet, Peter was reluctant until Jesus rebuked

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 1341. Also see Acts, chapter 10.

<sup>102</sup> John 21.

<sup>103</sup> John 13:38.

<sup>104</sup> Mark 14:29.

him.<sup>105</sup> Whatever the reasons for Peter's bold declarations of loyalty, it was only Jesus' declaration that Peter would disown him that came true.

Like many people seeking to understand God's vision for their life, Peter's preconceived ideas were shattered in his failure as he denied his Master three times. Then before Peter could make things right, Jesus died. Part of Peter surely died, too. Unbeknownst to Peter, however, his vision was being forged on the anvil of faith by the hammer of his failure.

Unsure of their future, Peter led the disciples back to their familiar and comfortable trade of fishing.<sup>106</sup> Peter's initial encounter with Jesus was near the water and fishing. Jesus again appeared to them at the water's edge. Surprised by the risen Savior, Peter must have been both excited to see Jesus and mortified over his personal failures. After eating together, Jesus re-instated Peter with a question and a commission. Both the question and the commission renewed and further shaped Peter's vision. The question in triplicate was, "Do you love me?" Peter was faced with the resolution of his bold and pretentious statement that he would never fall away. He had denied Jesus, but he also loved Jesus and Jesus knew it. Now, his love was wrapped in humility.

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<sup>105</sup> John 13:1-17.

<sup>106</sup> John 21:2.

Jesus charged Peter to “feed my lambs,” “take care of my sheep,” and “feed my sheep.”<sup>107</sup> Peter had heard Jesus say, “I am the good shepherd.”<sup>108</sup> He knew that being a care-taker and feeder included laying down his life in protection.<sup>109</sup> Peter as the key-holding, revelation-receiving Rock began to understand his vision as a feeder-protector. Peter wrote in his first letter, “To the elders [feeder-protectors] among you, I appeal as a fellow elder . . . .” He continues , “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers -- not because you must but because you are willing . . . .”<sup>110</sup> Peter’s vision became less lofty, yet more clear. With growing clarity, there is peace and precision.

#### Vision: Larger than Self

Jesus broadened and re-focused Peter’s vision for ministry when he said through the dream at Cornelius’ home, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”<sup>111</sup> Peter’s vision was not yet totally refined. He was growing in his understanding of the heart of the Master and the character qualities that he must have to be the Rock. He had seen Jesus start to “build” the Church using the “keys” Peter now possessed. Peter, empowered by the Spirit, unlocked the “doors of heaven” on the

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<sup>107</sup> John 21:15-18.

<sup>108</sup> John 10:11.

<sup>109</sup> John 10:12.

<sup>110</sup> 1 Peter 5:1.

<sup>111</sup> Acts 10:13.

day of Pentecost.<sup>112</sup> Through the revelation at Cornelius' house, the Lord took him through yet another refining of vision. It was not an easy lesson.

While praying,<sup>113</sup> he received his revelation concerning Cornelius. Peter came face to face with the fact that the Gospel was not just for Jews, but also for the Gentiles. Peter had heard directly from Jesus about going forth to all nations.<sup>114</sup> Peter heard Jesus say that he and the other disciples would be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.<sup>115</sup> Did he understand that this expansion would include all Gentiles? Did he also understand that he would not be the primary leader to reach those Gentiles?

Faced with the command to "Kill and eat," Peter was confused and resolved not to eat unclean food. "Surely not, I have never eaten anything impure or unclean," was Peter's reply.<sup>116</sup> God, however, showed Peter that there was no favoritism in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to both Jews and Gentiles.<sup>117</sup> Through his revelation, Peter's understanding of the extent of the Gospel widened to include all the nations of the world.

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<sup>112</sup> Acts 2:14-41.

<sup>113</sup> The custom at the three o'clock hour.

<sup>114</sup> Matthew 18-20.

<sup>115</sup> Acts 1:8.

<sup>116</sup> Acts 10:14.

<sup>117</sup> Acts 10:34-48.



Peter explained God's plan and his dream to the other Apostles. After telling the story, they said, "So then, God has even granted the Gentiles repentance unto life."<sup>118</sup> While Peter saw the plan for the salvation of Gentiles, it was not until Paul's confrontation that Peter's heart of hypocrisy toward the Gentiles changed.<sup>119</sup> Peter initially acted hospitably, receiving Gentiles on some occasions, but he would then change his actions by accommodating Jewish traditions in the presence of intimidating Jews. Once corrected, Peter and the apostles at the church in Jerusalem were free to advise, accept and love the Gentile converts.<sup>120</sup> Being the missionary to the Gentile world, however, would not be the main thrust of Peter's vision. Paul and Barnabas were commissioned to take the Good News to the Gentile world. Paul would be the Apostle to the Gentiles, not Peter.<sup>121</sup>

#### Peter's Personal Vision in the Larger Ministry Context

Peter had been called, challenged, consecrated, commissioned as an apprentice, and been given the keys to the kingdom. He had also denied his Master and been re-instated graciously. Peter, the Rock, was the leader of the Church. Finally, with the vision at the house of Cornelius, Peter's eyes were open to the extent of God's plan of salvation. God's plan was to be all inclusive --

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<sup>118</sup> Acts 11:1-18.

<sup>119</sup> Galatians 2:11-21 and Acts 15:6-21.

<sup>120</sup> Acts 15:22-25.

<sup>121</sup> Galatians 2:8.

worldwide. Peter's *vision of ministry* was expanded at Cornelius' house. His personal *vision for ministry* was now focused. While Peter "opened" the door of salvation for the Gentiles, he would not be the Apostle to go through it.

Peter continued to be a "door" opener as an elder-evangelist. He said in his first letter, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that is in you."<sup>122</sup> As a fisher of men and women, he said in his second letter that God is not "wanting any one to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."<sup>123</sup> Peter was a protective shepherd by guarding against false teachers in his letters.<sup>124</sup>

Like many youth leaders in a multi-staffed church, Peter's personal vision for ministry was less broad than the over-riding ministry context of the local church. Peter had specific responsibilities. When addressing his readers, Peter obviously addressed some Gentiles in his flock, but his was mostly a Jewish audience.<sup>125</sup> Peter knew that God had appointed Paul especially to the Gentiles and had given him special gifts.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> 1 Peter 3:15.

<sup>123</sup> 2 Peter 3:9.

<sup>124</sup> 2 Peter, chapter 2.

<sup>125</sup> Peter's reference to Old Testament is clear and would be understood by Jews. But his mention that the readers were "not [to] conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance" suggests some Gentiles in his audience. See 1 Peter 1:1, 17; 2:4-8 in relation to Jews, and 1:14 in relation to Gentiles.

<sup>126</sup> Peter's recognition of Paul's writing as equal to "other Scriptures" demonstrates this understanding.

### Conclusions Concerning Vision

Peter had to understand what a disciple-apostle was to “be” before he could understand what he was to “do.” Peter was to be a person of character and integrity. Upon Peter’s understanding of this, Jesus began to unfold before Peter what he was to “do” as the Rock. Peter was to be a serving leader to the emerging church, a caring shepherd for local and scattered flocks of God, and a graceful and compassionate preacher of Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus used Peter and his testimony about the Christ to build the Church. While Peter understood that the scope of the mission of the kingdom was worldwide, he also came to understand that his part in that mission had God-given parameters.

Peter’s vision *of ministry and for ministry* grew as he grew in his relationship with Jesus. Over a lifetime, he developed an understanding of how God would use him in the expansion of the Kingdom. His vision expanded beyond his life. Peter’s encouragement of believers reflects the importance of personal character and an evangelistic vision. He said in the closing remarks of his second letter that believers should make “every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with [God].”<sup>127</sup>

Studying Peter’s life with Jesus instills in the student both envy and fear. Envy is felt for the personal time Peter spent face to face with the Lord. Fear is

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<sup>127</sup> 2 Peter 3:12.

felt because of the hard lessons Peter had to learn from Jesus. There is, however, an enormous amount of encouragement in seeing how Peter matures and is mightily used as he is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

In chapter four, the design of this thesis project is set forth. The project seeks to help youth leaders grow and develop in their ministry as Peter did in his ministry. In such growth, there can be both excitement and painful personal growth as the Lord Jesus molds the youth leader and youth ministry of the local church.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PROJECT DESIGN

It can be both enjoyable and rewarding to increase the numbers in a youth ministry by offering entertainment and spectacular programming. Many times youth leaders can attract large numbers of students to exciting concerts, retreats and events, but the long-lasting impact of an event-oriented ministry is often a group of students just waiting to be entertained. The youth leader becomes exhausted because his or her efforts are not going into the spiritual lives of students, but into the tremendous amount of hours it takes to make these events go smoothly. There is an alternative. Programs and entertainment are a part of every youth ministry but should not be the driving ministry force. I believe that the number of kids in a particular youth ministry and the depth of their spiritual walk is not linked to programming, but directly linked to the leader's personal character and vision. A church youth leader should not expect God to grow a youth group larger or more rapidly than the leader's personal character can handle. In addition, a well-planned, God-directed vision will give a youth group a solid foundation to grow and mature. Expansion in this way should not cause frustration and exhaustion, but exhilaration as God's plan unfolds both personally and professionally. Thus, phase one of this thesis project helps the youth leader develop his or her spiritual life through prayer and accountability. The youth

leader will be directed through a process that will build a ministry philosophy and vision. In phase two, the youth leader will be given directions for evaluating his or her current youth ministry and for making the necessary changes. The final phase will direct the youth leader on how to review the changes he or she has made and again make the necessary adjustments. This long-term approach to youth ministry planning will prolong the professional life of the youth leader, as well as give growth and depth to the individual church's youth ministry program.

### Phase One: Focusing the Youth Leader

#### Focusing the Youth Leader Starts with Personal Character Sensitivity

This phase of the thesis project seeks to help create a “spiritual posture” in which the youth leader's character can be developed more readily by God. A “spiritual posture” is defined as a condition of the heart, soul, and mind that is sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and convicting. Through prayerful contemplation, the project encourages the youth leader to look deeply into his or her life, surroundings, and place of ministry. The youth leader is encouraged to examine from where God has brought him or her and to where God might be leading in the future. Although changes in behavior may occur, the project is in no way an attempt to reform the flesh of an individual or to embark on a self-improvement campaign.

### Personal Character Sensitivity: Initiated by God-Dominated Prayer

Personal prayer is the starting place for developing the sensitivity and posture that allow God to work on character. God desires to mold us into the likeness of Jesus. Failure to maintain this posture is potentially devastating to both the personal and professional lives of youth leaders. However, making time for quiet reflection and prayer is very difficult. The time demands, pressures of travel, retreats, lock-ins and hours of counseling nibble away at a youth leader's schedule. Character, through compromise and coercion, can be challenged to the point of failure. Once there is failure, a life of ministry could be rendered ineffective, or at the very least, deeply scarred.

Eugene Peterson's thoughts on prayer will serve as a helpful working definition for God-dominated prayer:

Our culture presents us with forms of prayer that are mostly self-expression -- pouring ourselves out before God or lifting our gratitude to God as we feel the need and have the occasion. Such prayer is dominated by a sense of self. But prayer, mature prayer, is dominated by a sense of God. Prayer rescues us from the preoccupation with ourselves and pulls us into adoration of and pilgrimage to God. Pastors, who are vocationally immersed in so much *experience* -- people throbbing with pain, panicked in crisis, mired in confusion -- are in particular need of such rescue.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, Under the Unpredictable Plant (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1992), pp. 102-103.

Within this thesis project, God-dominated prayer is desired. The book of Proverbs says, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”<sup>2</sup> Fortunately, God knows the content of the heart.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, as the youth leader seeks the Lord in prayer, the leader can clearly see the content of the heart, confess sin, and be restored if necessary.

At the beginning of this project, I spent two relaxed half-days at home while the rest of my family was out of town. With the belief that my pride was and remains a root sin in my life, I sought through prayer and reading Scripture to expose areas of pride in my life. I wrote out prayer questions that I thought would continually help me see how focused I am on myself. These prayer questions are included in Appendix A. As a result of the two half-days in prayer, God revealed these glaring sin issues in my life: the fear of failure, the belief that knowledge and skill are the keys to successful ministry, and the desire to receive the personal glory from a successful ministry. As the prayer time went from being self-dominated to God-dominated, the Holy Spirit began to minister to me. He changed my focus and heart. At that time, I was able to develop a set of accountability questions that when asked of me, would reveal the status of my character and personal life. These questions are also listed in Appendix A.

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<sup>2</sup> Proverbs 4:23.

<sup>3</sup> See Jeremiah 17:9-10.



A thousand years ago, the Desert Father Abba Arenus used this basic rule in his spiritual pursuit, “Flee, be silent, pray.”<sup>4</sup> This is great advice for the youth leader. To be still, to be quiet and to go before God with regularity and with a deliberate pace creates an atmosphere of accountability. It is through such accountability that God molds and makes the youth leader into the person he desires. In his book, The Making of a Leader, Dr. Robert Clinton points out, “The God-given capacity to lead has two parts: giftedness and character.”<sup>5</sup> He goes on to say that this character, particularly its integrity, will be tested as God develops a leader. Part of the development includes being able to listen to God. “A leader who repeatedly demonstrates that God speaks to him gains spiritual authority.”<sup>6</sup> The youth leader, like any leader, needs to hear from and respond to the Lord.

**Action Point One: Practice God-Dominated Prayer and Develop Accountability Questions**

- In the initial thirty days of this project, seek through prayer to have God reveal more clearly the content of your heart. It may be wise to ask some friends to pray for you during this time.

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<sup>4</sup> Henri J. M. Nouwen, The Way of the Heart (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> J. Robert Clinton, The Making of a Leader (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress Publishing, 1988), p. 58.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

- Schedule a relaxed but concentrated time in prayer. Pray and read Scripture. Take time to journal your thoughts and the results of your prayer time.
- As soon as possible, develop your own accountability questions through God-dominated prayer. (Use either the prayer questions provided, or create your own.) As you pray, look for those issues that are recurring. I have included my personal accountability questions at the end of Appendix A. It is essential, however, that you have your own personal questions. You know better than anyone else the areas in which you need accountability. God will bring those issues to a clear focus through your prayer time.
- This process is not easily accomplished. Therefore, you may find that you need to schedule a few days away from other responsibilities. Completion of this first *Action Point* is critical. The thesis project builds upon this focusing of your personal character and character issues.

#### Personal Character Sensitivity: Forged by Relationships of Accountability

Hearing and obeying God is an activity left up to the person. However, the Christian life is not designed to be lived alone. Having a person to whom the youth leader can be accountable is essential to character sensitivity.

The youth leader may need to be disciplined by someone. This includes training in the basics of a daily walk with God, prayer, Scripture reading, and

journaling. The youth leader may also want or need a mentor, someone older and more mature who models spiritual wisdom. When developing character sensitivity, however, the youth leader is simply seeking to establish a relationship with someone who will direct his or her attention to God and help the leader be “attentive to God”<sup>7</sup> in the circumstances of character and ministry. This person could be a discipler, a mentor, or simply a good friend. The primary concern is that the person be trustworthy, Spirit-filled, and available to the leader.<sup>8</sup>

For the purposes of this project, the “accountability person” is also someone to whom the youth leader deliberately submits. Spiritual accountability is a deliberate submission to the Lord and to others. Accountability, especially regarding character sensitivity, is not an imposed circumstance that God forces on the leader without his or her involvement. If the youth leader is hoping that someone will just come along, show special interests, and “hold” him or her accountable by inquisition, the leader will probably not experience accountability.

Praying for a relationship with someone who is caring and available is the place to start. After that person is brought forth by God, the direct question is then put to him or her, “Will you hold me accountable in the following ways, for the following issues, and also any issues that you might add?” In asking such a

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<sup>7</sup> See Eugene Peterson’s thoughts on spiritual direction, Under the Unpredictable Plant, p. 181.

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix B for suggestions regarding relationships of accountability.

question, the leader demonstrates a desire to be held accountable about specific issues that he or she has defined, as well as those the accountability partner might see as a need. The youth leader will have to actively pursue this relationship. For the leader to wait to be pursued is not only presumptuous, but may prove very ineffective.

Starting out in ministry at The Chapel on the Campus, I desired to have someone pursue me and ask me the hard questions. I wanted someone to care about me and my ministry. To bring youth ministry issues before our church elder assigned to the youth ministry, I would occasionally join him on his daily jog. During the jog I would present issues or casually ask for his suggestions regarding the ministry. While this helped in communication, it was not an accountability relationship.

After about a year of this type of communication, I still felt alone in my ministry efforts. I began to pray for someone to hold me accountable. Finally a different elder asked while playing basketball with me (a game I initiated) if I were in a small group of men. I responded affirmatively that I was indeed involved in several small groups with male high school students. After he pointed out that I really needed to be with adult men for accountability, I responded in frustration that no one had taken a personal interest in me or my ministry. Thankfully, this elder heard my pain, ignored my whining, and asked me to start meeting with him

weekly. That initial meeting was over three years ago. During the past three years, I have opened up my life to him. Additionally, I gave him the accountability questions I had written. I have given him permission to ask me about these issues whenever he thinks it is needed.

Before this elder and I started meeting, I had asked a friend to hold me accountable. He had a son in the youth ministry and was a longtime acquaintance. Initially, he could not meet with me because of other commitments. However, about six months ago (Feb. 1994) he began to see the need for accountability in his own life. We now meet on a weekly basis. He also has my accountability questions. Meeting with this friend and the elder has created an accountability structure that helps me stay sensitive to God's working in my life.

Relationships of accountability have their limitations. An accountability relationship should not be one of a surrogate father, priest or savior. The youth leader must see God as *Abba* Father. A relationship of accountability should not revolve around the youth leader seeking the approval of the accountability partner, but seeking God and his approval. Likewise, the accountability partner cannot be the person who receives confessions in place of Christ, our mediator. The accountability person is someone to whom confessions are made,<sup>9</sup> but not without confession to the Lord for the restoration of a relationship with Him.

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<sup>9</sup> See James 5:16.

*Action Point Two: Pursuing an Accountability Relationship*

- List the names of people you trust and to whom you could submit. There are some general suggestions and ideas presented in Appendix B. Begin to pray about each person, looking for God's leading. When you feel God lead you towards a particular person, ask that person about committing to a relationship of accountability. If that person responds negatively, keep praying and wait again for God's guidance.
- As you approach a particular person, clearly define what you are looking for in the relationship. If this person is receptive, clarify the particulars of a weekly or monthly meeting and what you hope to accomplish. Present your personal list of accountability questions to this person and submit to him or her.
- Be open to whomever God brings your way, whether or not they are on your original list of people. This process might take a year, or it might take a week. Be sensitive to what God is doing in your life during this process.

Personal Character Sensitivity: Practiced through Faith Acts

Through prayer and accountability, the youth leader may be made aware of some areas in his or her life that need to be acted upon in faith.<sup>10</sup> Deliberately stepping into a situation that requires faith, and might be uncomfortable, is a faith act. Faith acts should be a part of the everyday experience of walking in the

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<sup>10</sup> It could very well be that there is no leading into faith acts during this portion of the project.

Spirit.<sup>11</sup> While the youth leader seeks to grow in character sensitivity, God may make it apparent that the youth leader should be engaged in prolonged actions of faith. This effort is in no way to be understood as meritorious. The issues to be acted upon in faith should have their origin in prayer and accountability relationships, not in self-righteous zeal. Also, the faith actions should not be fueled by self-will but by the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup>

In executing this thesis project, the faith act that became an issue for me was preaching weekly at East Baton Rouge Juvenile Detention Center. When first approached by an elder with seven years of prison ministry experience, I thought the opportunity would be fun and educational. It also scared me to death. I had no previous experience with incarcerated teenagers. During my initial visits to the detention center, God began to impress upon me the value of a high-school-aged soul. The students whom I deal with at the church are, for the most part, Caucasian and upper middle class. The majority of students at the detention center are African-Americans from single-parent families with an under-privileged social context. The people in the detention center were kids, maybe not students, but kids needing Jesus.

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<sup>11</sup> Compare Hebrews 11:6 and Romans 14:23.

<sup>12</sup> See 2 Corinthians 3:5 and Ephesians 3:20. The revelations of the areas and the ability to act upon them is from God.

I committed to going to the detention center, aware that the programs and talks I used at the church would need to be greatly modified. I had few personal resources to use in this experience. Strengths certainly became weaknesses as I tried to minister to a culture so foreign to my own. God has shown me that His work, not my futile effort, brings life changes. God continues to stretch my faith and those around me who have become interested in this ministry because of my involvement. My commitment to this faith act has kept the value of *one* soul impressed upon my thoughts and prayers. My commitment to this faith act has given me more compassion and understanding for the lost, and especially the “least” of those in society.

In the process of seeking to join with God in the arenas where he is stretching one’s faith, the youth leader develops his or her ability to hear from God and respond to him. This development occurs through both the establishment and stimulus of faith acts that demand a sensitive spirit to ferret out the leading and empowering of God’s Spirit. The desire is for this process to solidify the character issues that God is growing in the leader. Additionally, it is fertile ground for vision development and expansion.

The overall goal of a faith act is to grow in the strength and grace of the Lord, not substitute human activity for His strength, grace and mercy. Peter’s encouragement is to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior



Jesus Christ.”<sup>13</sup> Along with growing in grace, God-lead, Spirit-empowered, faith-based actions create an atmosphere for vision. While vision development is not the primary goal of such actions, it is a motivating byproduct.

George Barna, in The Power of Vision, suggests that actions based in faith and vision are actually related. This relationship makes faith acts even more important. Barna says:

In pursuing the vision, prepare to be stretched and challenged beyond your comfort zone. God’s vision for your ministry, like the one He prepares for a church, will cause you to grow by demanding that you change, sharpen your skill and participate in situations in which your only hope of success is enabling His Spirit to guide you and empower you.<sup>14</sup>

Faith acts are an attempt to “participate in a situation” where there is faithful and total dependence upon God. Planned and scheduled activities of faith for the desired goal of character sensitivity are only decided upon through prayer and counsel. There is no rush to establish a regimented lifestyle. The process is one that flows from a relaxed, prayerful time when the youth leader is seeking for God to expose areas of his or her life that could be stretched.

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<sup>13</sup> 2 Peter 3:18a.

<sup>14</sup> George Barna, The Power of Vision (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1992), p. 145.

**Action Point Three: Establishing a Faith Act**

- Seek to have a developed character by being faithful to the little things that God brings into your life.
- Review the thoughts and ideas that come out of your extended time in prayer to see if there is an issue that God is leading you to act upon. Refer to Appendix C for some thoughts and directives for faith acts. While I have only personally discussed the detention center issue, I have included other issues requiring faith in the appendix. The examples may be helpful in your understanding. Pray specifically and ask God to give you a challenge only *he* can answer.
- Once a faith act is decided upon, it is helpful to include the activity and issues relating to it in your accountability relationship. There is a blank form included in Appendix C for logging such information. Please refer to it.

Focusing the Youth Leader Continues with the Leader's Personal Vision for  
Ministry

This thesis project has been designed from the point of view that a leader's character is central to all the leader is and does. Without character, the youth leader is a hollow shell of a spiritual leader and will be unable to meet the demands of a numerically and spiritually growing youth group. Without character, the youth leader lacks the integrity to effectively proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ over a lifetime of ministry. Without character, the youth leader cannot

extend the hope of Jesus Christ.<sup>15</sup> Without checks on personal character, the youth leader's character can slowly erode because of the deluge of life's worries and struggles flooding in from all sides. As previously stated, Scripture encourages everyone to guard the heart, for "it is the wellspring of life."<sup>16</sup> This is especially true of youth leaders.

Vision for ministry is second to personal character in effective ministry. It is the next step in seeking God's plans for expanding the numbers and the spiritual maturity of a youth group. George Barna gives this simple definition: "Vision for ministry is a clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to His chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of God, self and circumstances."<sup>17</sup> Vision is essential for ministry.

Can vision be developed? For some, a vision from God breaks into time and space without any warning or relation to the righteousness of the one who receives it. Even so, there seems to be a position or posture that helps in discerning God's vision for a youth leader within a given place and time. Peter was in prayer when he received the vision to get up and eat with the Gentile, Cornelius.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Romans 5:4.

<sup>16</sup> Proverbs 4:23.

<sup>17</sup> Barna, The Power of Vision, pp. 28-29.

<sup>18</sup> See Acts, chapter 10.

George Barna states, "If you are truly seeking God's vision for your ministry, it is a personal matter between you and Him. To fully understand the vision, you must be prepared to invest yourself in the acquisition process."<sup>19</sup> Barna continues by stating that the components of vision include knowing yourself, knowing your ministry environment, and knowing God intimately.<sup>20</sup> Character sensitivity seeks to aid the youth leader in knowing God and self intimately.

How do character and vision relate? Which precedes the other? Is there a cause and effect relationship? It can be easily stated that without both character and vision, the youth leader's tenure in ministry will be drastically shortened. Leighton Ford put this relationship in perspective: "Vision is the very stuff of leadership -- the ability to see in a way that compels others to pay attention."<sup>21</sup> By putting the leadership responsibilities before "visionary" roles, a youth leader's character precedes his or her vision. To state it another way, character is essential in ministry when a leader is seeking to develop God's vision for his or her ministry. The vision might be the catalyst for character sensitivity,<sup>22</sup> or it might be that a sensitive character allows for the revelation of a vision. In either case,

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<sup>19</sup> Barna, The Power of Vision, p. 78.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 79-94.

<sup>21</sup> Leighton Ford, Transforming Leadership (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1991), p. 99.

<sup>22</sup> See comments by Leighton Ford, The Power of Story (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress Publishing, 1994), p. 11.

character is central to the pursuit and development of the vision. This is why the character of the youth leader is considered first in this project, and vision is considered after personal character sensitivity.

George Barna includes four things in developing his definition of vision. A vision is first clear; it is future-oriented with preferred changes; it is imparted by God; and it is imparted to a chosen leader. He also gives a more general definition: “Vision for ministry is a reflection of what God wants to accomplish through you to build His Kingdom.”<sup>23</sup> The first step in the process of capturing God’s vision for your youth ministry is understanding your past.

#### Personal Vision: Begins by Knowing Your Past

A personal vision for ministry is often predicated upon a clear understanding of what God has done in the life of the leader until the present point of the leader’s life. Knowing my past, particularly relating to vision of youth ministry at The Chapel on the Campus, starts with understanding that my conversion to Christ was through the ministry of Young Life. Both Young Life’s relational evangelism and the incarnational behavior <sup>24</sup>of my Young Life leader marked me deeply.

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<sup>23</sup> Barna, The Power of Vision, p. 29.

<sup>24</sup> By incarnational behavior I mean the Young Life leader came to my “world” to be a part of my everyday experiences at my school and social gatherings.

As I entered youth ministry at The Chapel on the Campus, my gut reaction was to start developing relationships and to go where the students lived. Incarnational and relational ministry are a part of my make-up and would surely be a part of a vision for ministry. Besides that approach to ministry, my Young Life experience also gave me an approach to the method of ministry. As a collegiate Young Life leader, I was involved with a sixty-person volunteer staff. I knew I would pursue a team-based approach to youth ministry. This was supported through my seminary education where I learned the biblical injunction to equip people to do ministry rather than nurturing a one-man show.

Dr. Robert Clinton in his book, The Making of a Leader, delineates and identifies many of the common issues in the early stages of leadership development. As Dr. Clinton explains, “Ministry activity or fruitfulness is not the focus of the early phases of a youth leader’s life.” He adds, “God is working primarily *in* the leader, not *through* him or her.”<sup>25</sup> It is during these developmental stages of a leader that God often plants the seed of vision. Exploration of your past is done through identifying the people and events during the early phases of life and ministry.<sup>26</sup> Another way to understand the process is to identify the pivotal people and places in your life where God revealed himself. Noah,

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<sup>25</sup> Clinton, Robert, The Making of a Leader (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1988), p. 45.

<sup>26</sup> The ideas and forms (which appear in Appendix D) used for this section come from lecture notes by Paul Stanley, Arrow Leaderships Program, Leighton Ford Ministries, Section one, Charlotte, N.C., Jan. 92., pp. 2-10.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses all built altars to the Lord at significant times when God revealed himself to them.<sup>27</sup>

Dr. Robert Clinton states, “God providentially works through family, environment and historical events.”<sup>28</sup> Identify the events and people that shaped your childhood, your life before Christ, your conversion, your call into ministry, and your current situation. Often, the events and people that God places in the life of a leader during these different phases of life are the foundations for vision. By reviewing the past and identifying those important people and events that God used in developing the youth leader, he or she can begin to clearly understand where God might be leading. This self-examination is very helpful in understanding one’s vision for ministry. Hindsight is important for vision.

**Action Point Four: Reviewing Your Past for Ministry Vision**

- It is said that hindsight is 20-20; however, looking back with a concentrated gaze at those experiences and people that have had an impact on you and your vision for ministry is difficult and time-consuming. I suggest you schedule a minimum of eight hours for completing the blank forms included in Appendix D. I have included my work as a guideline of whom and what you might consider significant in your past. A thorough job is important.

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<sup>27</sup> See Genesis 8:20, 12:8, 26:25, 35:7, and Exodus 17:5 respectively.

<sup>28</sup> Clinton, The Making of a Leader, p. 44.

- As you go through the process, you might begin to see some issues that could be a part of your vision for youth ministry. Be sure to journal any thoughts that the Lord brings to mind during the process.
- Note: You might find that looking back on your life brings forth many difficult memories. Depending on the severity of your past, it may be worthwhile to seek professional counseling to sort through the emotion of the past.

### Personal Vision: Broadened by Looking Ahead

Looking ahead is as important as looking into the past for grasping God's vision. George Barna discusses the investment as "grasping" God's vision.<sup>29</sup> Leighton Ford describes a visionary in Christ as one who will "long and pray to see as Christ sees."<sup>30</sup> Aubrey Malphurs parallels the beginning of vision with giving birth. He sees prayer as a detailed part of birthing God's vision, the conception of a dream.<sup>31</sup> This language is helpful because it implies that there is a gestation period for the leader. The youth worker with little experience or time in a local church can be encouraged. Birthing God's vision takes time, prayer, dreaming and studying the Word of God. If the youth leader wants to experience

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<sup>29</sup> Barna, The Power of Vision, p. 77.

<sup>30</sup> Ford, Transforming Leadership, p. 115.

<sup>31</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21st Century (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), pp. 56-61.



steady, prolonged growth in his or her ministry, he or she should not take shortcuts through these initial phases.

Youth ministry has a tendency to become program-oriented and pragmatic. “Do whatever it takes” to have a certain number of youth attend. “Do whatever it takes” to please the youth committee or parents. Many youth programs will go through several complete changes in philosophy of ministry and programs over a twelve-month period. Such changes are frustrating for everyone: parents, youth, volunteers, and the youth leaders. A better approach for a youth leader is to start out slowly and begin looking ahead, dreaming and praying about God’s vision for youth ministry in his or her local church.

As with character sensitivity, prayer is the starting point for vision development. Simply stated, the youth leader should ask the Lord for a vision for ministry. This may include praying with a group or team concerned about youth ministry. It may also include praying with the leadership of the local church.

With a growing understanding of self, based upon experience, a youth leader should also begin to dream about what God might do through him or her. The leader should remember that the ministry of the new covenant is given to us from God.<sup>32</sup> Such a ministry is given to leaders who are described in 2 Corinthians as earthen vessels so that the “all-surpassing power” for ministry comes from God

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<sup>32</sup> See 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

and “not from us.”<sup>33</sup> When praying and dreaming about a vision for ministry, the youth leader should have big dreams and pray with faith for a vision that goes beyond personal talents and abilities, thus giving God all the glory.<sup>34</sup>

Working with the youth at The Chapel on the Campus, I began to follow where I thought God was leading. During the spring of 1990, a group of involved parents and I began to consider all that the youth group might be and do. The core issues that resulted from the dreaming sessions were evangelism, education, and discipleship.<sup>35</sup> As I thought of a means of moving the students and the youth ministry in the direction of evangelism, education, and discipleship, I dreamed of using college students for the volunteer youth worker team.

There were at least three reasons my dreams included college students. First, college-age volunteers are naturally idolized by junior and senior high students. Second, it is The Chapel *on* the Campus of Louisiana State University. There are many collegians to draw from in creating a college student staff of volunteers. Lastly, my experience of being a part of a college youth staff with Young Life gave me the personal life experience to understand the effectiveness of such a ministry approach. These issues are some of the driving forces laying the foundation for the developing vision for our youth ministry at The Chapel on

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<sup>33</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:7.

<sup>34</sup> Malphurs, Vision For Ministry, p. 239.

<sup>35</sup> These issues are based integrally on Christ's Great Commission. See Matthew 28:18-20.

Campus. The dream of a college team would not be actualized for almost three years.

The questions stand: What period should one plan for in establishing this “big-picture” vision? Is this a one-time experience? George Barna makes a helpful statement:

Myth: If it takes too long to develop, the result probably is not true vision. Reality: God may take more pleasure in our attempt to know His mind than in our eventual ability to capture that insight. God does not place timetables on how quickly he expects us to capture His vision. The key is that we develop a life-style characterized by the vision-capturing process -- that is, a life in which He is preeminent, in which our desires are to know and please Him.<sup>36</sup>

In the meantime, the youth leader with a growing understanding of character and past personal history can begin to think about the primary function of youth ministry in his or her church. More on the articulation of this vision will be discussed in the next section.

#### **Action Point Five: Dreaming about Your Youth Ministry**

- Before a vision statement is written or volunteers are motivated to action, there needs to be an extended time of dreaming. This dreaming is based upon the four previously executed *Action Points*. It is, therefore, necessary that you

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<sup>36</sup> Barna, The Power of Vision, p. 61.

have taken adequate time to complete the information in the initial action points.

- Start the dreaming process alone with God, dreaming of what he could do through you for the youth ministry. Spend prayerful time recording all the possible dreams for your youth ministry. Do not limit this to what *you* think you can accomplish. Write down any and every idea God gives you during this time. Please see prayer suggestions in Appendix E.
- Finish out the dreaming process by getting the suggestions from other youth staff and volunteers.
- Finally, prioritize the results from all the brainstorming sessions. Priority is based on personal and church resources needed to develop an idea. Start with the ideas and dreams that can be accomplished with current resources. Then, continue to list those that you cannot currently accomplish and what you need to realize those goals. For example, there might be some ideas that require more volunteer help than you currently have. After your list is prioritized, you can begin to pray about the overall results of your ideas for the ministry.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Material from the brainstorming session has been purposely withheld to ensure the most creativity on the part of those conducting the thesis project.

Personal Vision: Advanced through a Philosophy of Ministry

After starting and continuing with adult (mostly parents) volunteers for the first two years (1991-'93), an effort to attract collegiate volunteers was begun in the summer of 1993. Once the youth staff and I started pursuing collegiate volunteers, I realized the need for a facet of communication. I was excited and eager for the college students to jump in without restraint. I wanted them to do relational and incarnational ministry. Most of the students, however, had not seen this type of ministry and were unsure of how to accomplish it. They had enthusiasm and desire but no working base from which to launch their own personal ministry. For many of the students and adult volunteers, their past ministry involvement consisted of a weekly meeting format. The volunteers needed a practical working grid and, for some, even a biblical base from which to work as they joined me in pursuing the vision.

We purposely began to lay a foundation for ministry by communicating a philosophy of ministry from which we would operate. An example of a philosophy in youth ministry might be establishing relationships with youth as the primary building block upon which all the rest of the ministry is built. A strategy, as opposed to a philosophy, would be the specific steps and techniques taken to build and establish these relationships. There might be several different strategies used to accomplish youth ministry. Yet, the philosophy of ministry establishes the

guidelines and sets the mood by which various strategies are developed.<sup>38</sup> Because strategies for ministry are discussed more frequently than philosophies of ministry confusion can result as to the purpose of a particular ministry event.

I realized that the student volunteers needed to understand that ministry is God-empowered, not empowered by a person. I sought to answer basic questions and give biblical guidelines regarding ministry from the Scriptures. “Why be involved in ministry?” “Who does ministry?” “By what means is ministry done?” Obviously one answer is that believers are commanded to make disciples of all nations. I wanted the volunteers to understand the commission to ministry<sup>39</sup> and a deep love for Christ as a motivation.<sup>40</sup> I wanted them to see their ministry opportunities as a part of the “royal priesthood,”<sup>41</sup> and that they needed to be “full of the Spirit and wisdom.”<sup>42</sup> The college students needed to see their ministry “as though God were making his appeal through” them.<sup>43</sup> Many of the collegian volunteers were struggling to perform for, not serve the youth. Paul said, “All this

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<sup>38</sup> There are many helpful strategies for youth ministry that are both tried and biblical. See Barry St. Clair and Keith Naylor, Penetrating the Campus (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1993), Barry St. Clair, Leadership! (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1985), and Dann Spader, Sonlife, Strategy of Youth Discipleship and Evangelism (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Bible Institute, 1983). A dominant strategy used in this thesis project can be found in Leadership! pp. 43-44.

<sup>39</sup> See Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, and Luke 24:47.

<sup>40</sup> See 2 Corinthians 5:11 and 5:14. Some commentators see 2 Corinthians 5:14 as referring to Paul's love for Christ. Others see it as Christ's love for Paul. In either case it is a result of Christ's action (2 Corinthians 5:21). See The Cambridge Bible for Schools & Colleges, II Corinthians, ed. A Plummer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), pp. 48-51.

<sup>41</sup> 2 Peter 2:5, 9-10.

<sup>42</sup> Acts 6:3.

<sup>43</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:19b-20a.

is from God,” when referring to the means by which ministry is accomplished.<sup>44</sup> The power for ministry -- to love, give, and preach -- it all comes from God. Of course Jesus stated this when he said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”<sup>45</sup>

People volunteer for involvement in youth ministry for many reasons. They may have had a significant spiritual experience when they were young, and now they would like to provide the same experience for another youth. They may want to be involved in ministry but do not feel comfortable working with adults. They may just want to be with another friend who is currently volunteering with the youth. The reasons are many. Because of these varied motives and experiences, volunteers often come to work in youth ministry with much enthusiasm, but with little or no understanding of ministry. Taking an existing ministry team though guidelines for ministry will serve to educate the ministry team.<sup>46</sup> Even if they have some previous understanding or experience, it is profitable to work through your philosophy together, answering the basic questions of the ministry.

Establishing a formulated philosophy fosters unity among the volunteer team. As the leader takes his or her team through guidelines of ministry, any

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<sup>44</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:18.

<sup>45</sup> John 15:5.

<sup>46</sup> See Appendix F for the material used from 2 Corinthians for this purpose.

differing views in ministry philosophy will be discovered. This allows the team an occasion to discuss and come to understand the direction of the youth leader. Such a group exercise will also help minimize preconceived ideas concerning youth ministry. All of this brings the youth ministry team into a unified position ready to receive from the youth leader God's emerging vision.

**Action Point Six: Devise a Ministry Philosophy**

- Ask yourself, "What is my style?" Why do you approach certain ministry opportunities the way that you do? If you were to explain the biblical basis for your ministry actions, what would they be? Spend some time answering these questions and record your answers.
- A philosophy of ministry is foundational for ministry effectiveness. It might be that your ministry team needs to have the same issues addressed as my team did. If so, please refer to Appendix F. I went through 2 Corinthians, chapters one through six, to answer my volunteers' questions. You might use the material in the appendix, research other materials or write your own. The objective is to give yourself and your ministry team a grid from which to do ministry and seek God's vision.
- Understand your ministry style, and make sure your team understands it as well.



Personal Vision: Imparted to Ministry Team Through Communication of a Vision Statement

It is difficult to put a time frame on how long it takes for a leader to be character-ready for what God seeks to do through him or her. Yet, at some point, if the youth leader is seeking God's plan, he or she will be ready to take an emerging God-given vision and pass it along to those working in the ministry effort.

As God begins to reveal a direction and a mission for the youth ministry, the youth leader is motivated to move in that direction. Very seldom does the youth leader work alone. There are Sunday school teachers, concerned parents, eager volunteers, or even multiple youth staff that might make up a ministry team. It is the leader's responsibility to communicate what God is doing in his or her life and where God is leading the youth ministry.

When I began working in youth ministry at the Chapel in 1991, the volunteer base consisted of several parents. As previously stated, I began to dream about a team of collegiate volunteers as a base for the youth ministry. I was convinced that collegians were the best choice for relational evangelism and discipleship. They have the time to develop relationships with junior and senior high students. Most adults do not have the same kind of time for relationships. Without much explanation, I began to pursue this vision and collegians. Unfortunately, without really knowing it, I offended and discouraged my

wonderfully gifted parent volunteers. I had an idea in mind of who the best type of volunteer was and completely overlooked what God had provided. After realizing my mistake, I apologized to many of those initial adult volunteers. They did all agree that college students would bring an enthusiastic force to the ministry; but because I did not clearly communicate with those initial helpers, there were hurt feelings and confusion.

Aubrey Malphurs states in his book, Vision for Ministry, “To birth a vision without conveying the mission would be as strange as birthing a child and not sending out birth announcements.”<sup>47</sup> He further states a primary role of a leader is to “cast” the vision he or she is receiving from God; “. . . conveying the vision becomes the primary responsibility of the visionary leader who is the organization’s point person.”<sup>48</sup>

In the spring of 1994, our junior high staff worker encouraged a student to start a Bible club at her junior high. For acceptance by school authorities, the club had to be student-initiated. The junior high student asked and permission was granted for a Bible Club that could be lead by a junior high staff worker. After she and I talked about the possibilities, it was clear that this opportunity fit within our vision to be relational and incarnational. After further discussion and contact with

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<sup>47</sup> Malphurs, Vision for Ministry, p.94.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

the area Young Life director and another church, we helped launch the first junior high Young Life Club in the city. Responding to the opportunity and clarifying its evangelistic direction was possible because of a clear vision that could be communicated.

A clear vision allows the youth leader to lead, direct and serve the youth ministry and the church with confidence. Feeling led by God gives a youth leader confidence. Being able to articulate that leading of God to others gives them confidence in the leader. George Barna comments on confidence derived from vision:

Because the people [with a vision] feel empowered by God, they rise to challenges they could not ordinarily dream of confronting. Their performance is generally above average because they recognize that they are pursuing a higher calling and have been granted the stamina and resources to accomplish that end.<sup>49</sup>

A vision statement that is clear and easily communicated will help a ministry team understand the direction of the ministry. I have had to refer to the statement many times for collegiate volunteers. In the fall of the 1994 school year, I took the volunteers away for an overnight trip. On this trip, I reviewed the vision of the ministry again. After many reviews of the statement, I could see that it was beginning to make sense to some of the college students. Some of them were beginning to own the vision themselves. One of our most talented volunteers was

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

a veteran Young Life team leader and summer camp staff director. While his talents were obvious, he stayed frustrated trying to do ministry in a church youth group with a parachurch vision. After spending time with him concerning the vision (and our philosophy), he also began to own and be a part of the vision effort.

It takes time to create and present to the team a written statement of vision concerning the primary role of the youth ministry. While the statement should not be more than one page, its detailed explanation may take many pages.<sup>50</sup> As the leader communicates with the youth ministry team, opportunity for discussion and feedback from the group will provide clarity. Because God is working in the lives of the volunteers, their suggestions concerning the direction of God's leading and vision is valuable.

The communication process includes not only the leader's words, but all the youth leader is. Leighton Ford, in commenting on Jesus' ability to communicate a message from God, states in Transforming Leadership, "If . . . we see communication not as a technique, but as the expression of all that we are, then we find in Jesus the model of a master communicator."<sup>51</sup> With such an understanding about communication, it becomes obvious that the youth leader seeking God's

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<sup>50</sup> See Malphurs, Vision for Ministry, pp. 108-135, 204 for more discussion and examples of how to represent and present a vision.

<sup>51</sup> Ford, Transforming Leadership, p. 231.

vision of his or her ministry in a local church will, by necessity, communicate. The communication will not only concern the vision for ministry but also include the character of the leader. It will be communicated by both words and actions.

**Action Point Seven: Writing and Communicating an Initial Vision Statement**

- Before you start, pray and review notes taken while you dreamed about youth ministry. Your written statement should include all your dreams to date.
- Clarifying your thoughts about the youth ministry is a difficult process. Writing them down will sharpen your thinking and communication. Write an exhaustive statement that includes everything that you believe God wants to do with the youth ministry at your church.
- After the statement is written, present it to your volunteers, making needed modifications based upon their suggestions. Also present it to various people and leaders of the church, making modifications as needed. I have included the mission state for the youth ministry at The Chapel on the Campus in Appendix G. Refer to it and any other similar statement you can find for ideas on how to communicate an emerging vision.
- After you have a comprehensive statement reflecting all concerned parties' suggestions, try to reduce the statement to one clear paragraph.

- Once you have a clear paragraph, try to put the force of the vision statement in a one to three-point phrase. Again, the statement for The Chapel on the Campus is included in Appendix G. Please refer to it. You will notice that the three-point phrase is first, then a paragraph, and then a more lengthy statement. Remember it was created in the reverse order.
- Gather your team together and communicate your vision and dreams for your church's youth ministry.
- Note: if you cannot clearly communicate the vision at this point, it may be that you are unsure of God's leading or have not understood God's direction. Do not be discouraged. Continue to pray and discuss the vision with the youth ministry team to form a clear understanding that can be communicated.

#### Focusing the Youth Leader is Finalized by Understanding the Leader's Church Context

The youth leader, with a growing understanding of his or her character, is seeking to understand and articulate the vision God has concerning the primary function of youth ministry in the local church. Having taken what God had done in the leader's past and present experience, the leader has tried to communicate what he or she thinks the primary purpose for youth ministry is to the team. Now, the youth leader can take the vision statement to the local church authorities for their suggestions, prayer and consideration.

Failure to understand and include the authority of the local church is to overlook a primary way God can modify and clarify the vision for the youth ministry. Furthermore, overlooking this group can lead to frustration for the church leadership as well as the youth leader and youth ministry team. It is essential, therefore, that the youth leader bring to the church leadership what he or she believes God is doing in the youth ministry. Without communication and support, it is impossible to grow a youth group numerically and spiritually. Lack of unity and submission to church authority can only hinder and stifle the longterm growth of the youth ministry.

A youth leader might ask, “If I have a vision *from God* concerning the primary function of the youth ministry in my church, must I have it approved?” The simple answer is “yes.” God has placed the authorities over the youth leader. The governing body may understand the vision presented by the youth leader, but they may see God working out the vision in a different way from what the youth leader expected. Authority structures and boundaries do not simply function as obstructions, but help frame God’s plan for a local church.<sup>52</sup> The youth leader’s vision is completed by the church’s acceptance and authority.

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<sup>52</sup> Regardless of whether there is elder rule or congregational rule Acts 15:22 sets a principle for decision making within a local church.

Proverbs states, “In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.”<sup>53</sup> As explained in chapter two, Peter was given a vision from Christ concerning the Church.<sup>54</sup> His vision was broadened by God to include the Gentiles.<sup>55</sup> Yet, Peter’s vision from God would be realized in the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Paul, not Peter, would be the Apostle to the Gentiles. The context of the youth leader is very important in revealing a full understanding of any vision from God.

George Barna, in discussing the comprehension of a vision, says the following about context, “You must, therefore, have a firm grasp on existing and potential needs, conditions, competition, opportunities, barriers and potential if you want to absorb His vision for your ministry.”<sup>56</sup> The youth leader must conjoin in leadership of the local church to fully grasp the vision God has for the youth ministry.

In the spring of 1993, The Chapel’s youth staff and volunteers were discussing a problem experienced by many churches with a junior high Sunday school class. The problem was how physically and emotionally immature sixth graders could be adequately cared for in the same learning environment as more

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<sup>53</sup> Proverbs 16:9.

<sup>54</sup> Matthew 16:13-20.

<sup>55</sup> Acts 10:1-11:18;15:1-29.

<sup>56</sup> Barna, The Power of Vision, p. 32.



mature eighth graders. We had about 30-35 sixth through eighth graders in the same room and the difference in maturity made communication, discussion, and special events quite difficult. It was hard to find a “middle ground” of communication that appealed and ministered to both ages.

After struggling through various solutions, we approached the children’s ministry department to better understand our church context. Shortly into the conversation we discovered that the director of the children’s ministry not only had a similar problem, but also a solution. Having just come from a conference where this problem was addressed, the director decided that the fifth and sixth grades would be combined, and the seventh and eighth grades would be combined. Thus the gaps in maturity would not be so wide, and each group would receive more attention.

Communicating with the other ministries in our church context allowed us to come up with the best solution for our church. Understanding and submitting to the church context is crucial to the implementation of a vision.

The process of approaching, discussing, praying about and even disagreeing with the context and leadership of the local church is a form of leadership in itself. In his book The Leadership Factor, John Kotter of the Harvard Business School defines leadership as “. . . the process of moving a group (or groups) of people in

some direction through (mostly) non-coercive means.”<sup>57</sup> If God has given a vision to the youth leader, the church leadership will encourage the youth team toward accomplishing the vision. Kotter comments further by stating three ingredients present in effective leadership,

(1) a vision of what should be, a vision which takes into account the legitimate interest of all the people involved, (2) a strategy for achieving that vision, a strategy that recognizes all the broadly relevant environmental forces and organizational factors, (3) a cooperative network of resources, a highly motivated group of key people in that network, a group committed to making that vision a reality.<sup>58</sup>

Kotter’s ingredients for effective leadership all contain an awareness of context. For instance he first emphasizes “the legitimate interest of all the people involved”; in a local church this includes the ruling body. In his second ingredient, Kotter includes the recognition of “all the broadly relevant environmental forces and organizational factors.” Again, such words often describe the ruling body in a local church. Finally, Kotter’s third ingredient includes “cooperative” networking. The youth leader seeking God’s vision for the primary function of youth ministry within a church must do so in cooperation with the church leadership and other ministries of the church.

In the process of engaging the leadership of the church, the youth leader is not trying to persuade, but to lead. The leading is done by serving the broader

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<sup>57</sup> John P. Kotter, The Leadership Factor (New York: The Free Press, 1988), p. 16.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

interests, by praying for clarity, and by listening to others possibly affected by the vision of the youth ministry. The youth leader, like it or not, is part of a larger scenario. He or she is a leader of a team youth ministry team and at the same time just a part of a larger church team. In commenting on a team leader's function, authors John Katzenbach and Douglas Smith state in their book, The Wisdom of Teams:

Team leaders are expected, by people outside as well as inside the team, to manage much of the team's contacts and relationships with the rest of the organization. This calls on the team leaders to communicate effectively the team's purpose, goals, and approach to anyone who might help or hinder it.<sup>59</sup>

If there is ownership of and agreement with the vision from the leadership the of church, then those involved with youth ministry are supported and empowered to advance in the direction of the youth leader's God-given vision. This vision now becomes a true part of the ministry of the church. If this does not occur and there is no communication, confirmation, and collaboration in this arena, the church leadership might think some actions taken by the youth leader or team are subversive. The whole process then becomes confusing. Not only is God's work in the church hindered, but also his work in the youth leader and youth ministry. Peter had a wise word for young leaders:

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<sup>59</sup> Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith, The Wisdom of Teams (Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Press, 1993), p. 142.

Young men, in the same way [as elders] be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.<sup>60</sup>

A youth leader needs to set the pace for those he or she is leading by submitting to authority.<sup>61</sup> Robert Clinton points out in The Making of a Leader that personal issues of coping with authority are a part of maturing in ministry. He says, "Leaders who have trouble submitting to authority will usually have trouble exercising spiritual authority."<sup>62</sup> He defines spiritual authority as "delegated by God," calling it the "primary authority base in leadership influence."<sup>63</sup> For the youth leader wanting to receive a vision from God, to grow in character, and to have spiritual authority as defined by Robert Clinton, he or she must also have the integrity to submit to authority.<sup>64</sup>

Submitting the leader's view of the primary function of youth ministry to the leadership of the church invites accountability to God. Wanting a youth group to grow numerically and spiritually can become a project, not a quest for God and His mission for this ministry. In a sterile project mentality, the flesh and self-reliance can take control. By going before the leadership of the church, a youth

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<sup>60</sup> 1 Peter 5:5-6. "As elders" added from the context, verse 5:1.

<sup>61</sup> See 1 Timothy 4:12.

<sup>62</sup> Clinton, The Making of a Leader, p. 101.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp.101,103.

<sup>64</sup> Refer to Appendix D for more on the Ministry Maturing Process.

leader is submitting to God with the desire that any self-reliance might be revealed. The book of Proverbs gives this advice, “Commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed.”<sup>65</sup> In submission to the authority of the local church, the youth leader is further seeking God. Leighton Ford has pointed out that a leader serving God is “serving another’s cause,” “teaching another’s truth,” “accepting another’s results,” “awaiting another’s time,” and “dreaming of another’s glory.”<sup>66</sup> For the youth leader to stay God-focused and not become self-focused, accountability is not only helpful, but necessary. Submission to local church authority keeps the youth leader, his vision and ambition further accountable to God.<sup>67</sup>

As previously discussed, I established a forum for discussing ministry issues by regularly being at the health club at the same time the elder over the youth ministry was there to jog. In the fall of 1993, I was very frustrated with the senior high Sunday school class I was leading. Many of the students were there only because their parents forced them to attend. Obviously, this took away from an already low amount of Sunday morning enthusiasm. My solution, after much thought and seeing it done successfully in other churches, was to discontinue the class. I concluded the students were old enough to carry their apathy to worship

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<sup>65</sup> Proverbs 16:3.

<sup>66</sup> See Transforming Leadership, chapter 5, pp. 81-98.

<sup>67</sup> Please see questions for church leadership, Appendix K.

service and burden the pastor's preaching. I communicated this decision to my elder. He challenged my decision. The elder encouraged me to see the students as a captive audience needing Christ. The problem had to do more with me than them. Therefore, I tried to see the class from a different point of view. My vision for the Sunday school class changed from educational to evangelistic. The vision for Sunday morning was focused, and I was excited.

The process of presenting and explaining a vision can be lengthy. If there are questions or modifications that need to be made, the youth leader will find multiple meetings with the church leadership most helpful. Once there is agreement on the primary function of the youth ministry, there may need to be some discussion about strategies.

**Action Point Eight: Knowing Your Church Context**

- You may have a very formal setting where you are in contact with the leaders of your church. If this is the case, this forum may give you an accurate reading of your church context and how the youth ministry fits into it. Many youth leaders, however, do not have regular and focused time with the leaders of the church. It is necessary for this *Action Point* that a forum be established. It might be lunch or scheduled "drop-in" visits to the senior pastor. Please refer to ideas in Appendix H.

- If this is a new step in your relationship with your church, take time and get to know and understand the context and the people of the church. It may seem that this is counter-productive to the demands of the youth ministry; but when it is time to proceed with the vision of the youth ministry, understanding the context is invaluable. Knowing the people, needs, and context is like being able to see the road as you drive.

#### Cautions and Possible Problems in Interaction with Church

This thesis project assumes that the leadership of the church is very concerned about a vision for itself and the ministries associated with it. This is not a safe assumption. Because many churches are unclear of their purpose and direction, the leadership might not see any need nor have any desire to join in with the youth leader in a discussion of the primary function of youth ministry in their church. Even if there is a lack of interest, it is not wise to abandon the process. The youth leader must pray for those in authority. God wants the youth leader to understand His heart for the youth ministry at that leader's church. God also wants to spread understanding to those ruling the church about what he desires to do in the church body at large and in the youth ministry. Prayer can break down any barriers and open communication between the youth leader and church members, church leadership, and God. "To desire" something for the youth is not to just

have a plan, but to follow God as he deepens the maturity and adds to the numbers of the youth group.

Juxtaposed to apathy is total disagreement. The youth leader may find that someone has received mixed signals and is at odds with the youth ministry. What the leadership of the church sees as the primary function of the church may be totally different from that of the youth leader. If this is the case, prayer is essential. Disagreement should not be considered discouragement. A vision is not necessarily a quick and easy consensus. George Barna address that myth. He says,

Myth: Vision should be the result of a consensus among the church's key leaders regarding the future activity by the church.  
 Reality: Vision is not the result *of* consensus; it should result *in* consensus. In a church, it is important that people own the vision for ministry, not that they create it.<sup>68</sup>

What Barna says about a church's vision can be said of a youth ministry's vision. Therefore, prayer for discernment is essential for the youth leader.

As the youth leader moves in the direction God is leading him or her, it is tantamount that there be someone to whom he or she is accountable. Integrity and character dictate that someone know why the youth leader is making the changes and moving out to follow the mission. Thus, if there is an occasion when the

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<sup>68</sup> Barna, The Power of Vision, p. 45.



ruling body questions the youth leader, he or she will have an accountability structure to explain any actions taken.

A final caution is to guard against bitterness. Having taken the time to prepare one's heart, and develop a vision, the tendency is to take rejection personally if the church leadership disagrees with your vision. This is not wise. Obviously if the vision is from God, he is the only one who can cause it to work. The process of the church leadership and youth leader talking, praying and seeking God is most important. It is impossible to know all that God is trying to teach the church leadership or teach the youth leader and team. Therefore, the call is to continue to seek God and to communicate with one another.<sup>69</sup>

#### Summary of Analysis of Youth Leader and Leader's Context

A youth leader's performance is defined by three issues: character, personal view of the primary function of youth ministry in the church, and the ruling body's view of youth ministry. Without character, a youth leader with vision and support of his or her local church might break under the pressures of youth ministry. Additionally, without character such a leader might compromise the truth in the pursuit of vision.

Paul gave this warning, "Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like

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<sup>69</sup> See Matthew 6:33.

men sent from God.”<sup>70</sup> While the “profit” here is concerning money, it could include the satisfaction of a large youth group at the sake of character. A leader without character, understanding and support from the church leadership will wander aimlessly, unsure of which way to continue. This youth leader will not be able to say “no” to tempting activities or new ideas that do not fit into his or her vision because he or she will not have a working grid by which to test these opportunities. Unsure of priorities, such a youth leader is left to the frenzy of possibilities and is worn out from running activities while searching for structure and affirmation.

Finally, a leader with character and a vision must, because of his or her character, communicate with the leadership of the church. This action will insure that divisions or subversive activity are not pursued. It will bring the youth leader and the leadership of the church into a relationship of accountability. All of this will come together to heighten the desire to seek and understand God’s activity in the local church.

The next step for the youth leader who has formulated, modified, clarified and communicated the youth ministry vision is to analyze all the current programs and activities. Phase two will direct the youth leader through this process.

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<sup>70</sup> See 2 Corinthians 2:17.

### Phase Two: Adjustments of the Youth Ministry in Light of Ministry Focus

Phase one was designed to help the youth leader hear from God and to receive a vision for his or her youth ministry. Phase two is designed to respond to what was heard and received. It has been stated that numerical and spiritual growth of a youth ministry is affected by the youth leader's character, vision for ministry, and church context. In this phase of the project, the existing priorities, resources, programs and events of the ministry will be compared to the focus developed in the first phase. Adjustments will be made as necessary. These adjustments will bring the youth leader and the ministry more in line with God's leading, therefore allowing for his Spirit to cause growth in the ministry. As in vision development, the first adjustments will be made in the youth leader's personal life.

#### Adjustments Start with the Youth Leader

When I started working at The Chapel on the Campus, I had many responsibilities, activities and programs that kept me very busy. Furthermore, since I had little previous experience, I was trying to learn the trade while on the job. This business kept me running from one task to another often without a passing thought of the overall vision and the direction God might want me to follow. I was engaged in crisis management.

After eighteen months, I was tired and desperately needed focus. I began to pray for direction, and God strengthened me by reminding me of a forgotten calling in my ministry. He had given me both the gifts and the desire for evangelism, yet I was not using these tools in a purposeful way. I also believed that the youth ministry at The Chapel was to be reaching out to non-Christian students, but other activities always seemed to fill up my work day. I realized that I needed to make some adjustments. My schedule needed to be more of a reflection of what I believed God desired for my ministry. Therefore, in the fall of 1993, I stepped out in faith and started going to various high school campuses every week to meet and interact with non-Christian students. This change demanded faith and discipline to turn from the inevitable crises of ministry and focus on what I believed God had gifted me to do, and what he had called the youth ministry at The Chapel on the Campus to be.

Even after the completion of *Action Points* one through eight of phase one, a youth leader may still conduct his or her life and the ministry without being in concert with the newly developed focus. Therefore, adjustments may need to be made that will bring the leader's life into line with the newly focused vision. If a leader is repeatedly or deliberately spending time in areas that are not in agreement with God's vision, it could be that the leader is being disobedient or lacks the

discipline or the courage to step out in faith. If this is the case, prayer, confession, and relationships of accountability will help direct the leader back to the vision.

A word of caution is necessary at this point. Evaluations and measurements of various kinds can lead to a rigid perspective of life that is not Spirit-led. During the assessment of and changes to his or her schedule, the leader must continually seek the Lord in prayer. The adjustments in life are an attempt to give God full control and yield to God's plans and vision. Adjustments are not an attempt to prove, earn, or gain standing with God.

**Action Point Nine: Adjustments in the Youth Leader's Life**

- If you do not currently keep a schedule of your time, take two weeks and record your life. Write down when you work, sleep, eat and exercise. When you record your work schedule, be detailed in your description. Record your time in meetings, on the phone, in counseling, leading activities, planning, studying, and teaching.
- With the results in hand, look over your weekly schedule. Where are you spending your time? What percentage of your time is going to your personal life, your ministry, exercise, sleep, and study. Take your work time and divide it into the time you currently spend with your various responsibilities.

- Write down any areas of life, (both at home and church) that are not in line with the new focus. Keep a journal of your needed adjustments.
- Meet with your accountability partner and discuss your schedule. Ask him or her to hold you accountable to changes that need to be made.<sup>71</sup>
- Pray for the grace and faith needed to make the adjustments. If necessary, discuss any changes with the youth team, church leadership, friends, and family. Prayerfully make adjustments!
- Do not be discouraged if you have several major adjustments to make. Take one adjustment a day, a week or a month. Ask God to adjust your life.

#### Adjustments Extend to the Youth Ministry

While many of the adjustments necessary for the leader's life might happen naturally in the focusing process (phase one), the resources, programs and events of the ministry will take deliberate examination. Through such an examination, those resource areas in need of adjustment will be easily identified.

Meeting with the youth volunteers of The Chapel in the fall of 1993, I discussed the need for more discipleship in the programs of the high school part of the youth ministry. We had a regular fall retreat with another church in the community that focused on evangelism. However, our programs and events did

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<sup>71</sup> See Faith Acts, Appendix C.

not reflect the discipleship vision of the youth ministry. Therefore, we took action to correct this deficiency.

It was decided that we would have a “small group” discipleship retreat every spring semester. In February of 1994, we scheduled our first retreat. Starting with only ten students, we drove to Arkansas for a three-night, four-day trip of study, hiking, and fun. We did, however, encounter obstacles when planning this new event.

Adjustments after our focusing process extended not only to the discipleship retreat but other resources and events of the ministry. While the retreat was new, it needed to be highly subsidized. This subsidy was to make the trip more affordable and show a new emphasis in the area of discipleship. There were, however, no current resources for such an event. The adjustments that follow the focusing process can be extensive.

#### Adjustments in Youth Ministry Resources

All resources used by the youth ministry need to be examined for possible adjustments in how they are currently used. All use of funds, equipment, educational materials and facilities should be examined in light of the new focus and vision.

An appraisal of the budget is usually an obvious place to start. An easy way to approach such an investigation is to examine the budget on a percentage basis. Where is most of the money spent, and is that in line with the vision of the youth ministry? If it is in line with the vision, is it an adequate amount of money? Continuing through all categories (line items) of funds in this manner will help the youth leader to evaluate the youth ministry financially. It may be necessary to create new categories in order to adequately facilitate the vision.

An appraisal of materials and facilities can be done in a similar fashion. The youth leader with various volunteers might spend some time reviewing the materials purchased to see if they are by percentage in line with the new focus of the ministry.

#### Appraisal of Youth Ministry Programs and Events

Finally, a comprehensive appraisal of all programs and events that are sponsored by the youth ministry need to be examined to see if they are helping to accomplish the vision that the church and youth leader have for the youth ministry. Because the youth ministry team is involved in the execution of these events and programs, they should be part of the discussions and analysis. It would also be wise and helpful to involve any youth who are leaders in the group. Such involvement will allow the leader and the team to get clarifying input and to include some of the youth in the process.



It can be an overwhelming task on the part of the youth leader and team to assess the purpose of all of the youth ministry events. Helpful to the assessment process is the basic understanding that changes can often be minimized by just clarifying the purpose of an existing event. A youth leader might ask, “What is the purpose of our Sunday School in light of the vision we now have for the youth ministry?” Evaluation may show that there is more of a need for re-focusing the youth ministry than for drastic adjustments. An obvious place to start this evaluation is with the weekly meetings. Can a purpose statement be written for each meeting that is in concert with the overriding focused vision of the youth ministry? Can the question, “Why do we have this meeting?” be answered clearly? Creating a clear statement for each event that is planned by the ministry team will refine the focus of the youth ministry.

Seasonal events are another arena to be examined. A leader might ask, “What are we trying to accomplish with the Valentine’s Dinner for eighth graders?” Because these events are seasonal, they are often not seen as a direct part of the ministry. Yet, the inefficient use of time and money on such events can be detrimental, if the events do not point the youth ministry toward the directed vision.

Annual retreats and events, like a summer mission trip or a discipleship weekend, are expensive and take hours of planning. Because this is true, a clear

purpose statement should be written for such an event. This will insure that the event is in agreement with the vision; thus, the youth leader can stay focused on the ministry objective and better organize the trip.

Finally, a list of the lesser events of youth ministry should be made. For instance, these “non-events” could be visits to homes and schools made by the youth leader or volunteer. Do the visits have a purpose that can be clearly stated? If not, the leader or volunteer might be going through the motions of youth ministry with no real understanding of the task at hand. Such activities may have nothing at all to do with the primary purpose of the youth ministry. All of this analysis is designed to lead to adjustments that bring the youth leader and ministry in line with the youth ministry vision.

During the program and event analysis, care should be made to note if there are programs or events to be added. At The Chapel, the “small group” discipleship weekend was such an addition.

**Action Point Ten: Listing Possible Adjustments for the Youth Ministry**

- Look over the finances available to the youth ministry and see how they are used. If you use a budget with line items, go through each item and see if the amount of money allocated for the item is reflective of the focused vision. List all areas that might need changes.

- With the volunteer team, look at other resources used or consumed by the youth ministry to see if they reflect the purpose and focus of the youth ministry. List any adjustments in such resources.
- When reviewing the programs and events of your youth ministry, start by trying to give each program or event a description that reflects the focused vision. Refer to Appendix I for an illustration of how this was accomplished at The Chapel. Involve any youth volunteers or staff in the process who you feel might give helpful input.
- After all programs and events have been clearly described or defined, list those programs that do not fit into the focused vision of the ministry and may need to be changed or even terminated.
- Finally, list any ideas for programs or events that might need to be added to the youth ministry, noting resources needed to offer the event.

#### Adjustments are Finalized Through Interaction with Others

As previously stated, because of the obvious maturity gaps in clustering sixth through eighth graders, the classic middle school grouping, we devised a plan for a pre-teen ministry for fifth and sixth graders at The Chapel. There was also a need to communicate and cooperate with all parents, children and other ministries that might be affected by this adjustment.

The pre-teen program was birthed with input from both the youth and children's ministries. However, scheduling and format of the program conflicted with the children's choir ministry. The only time to schedule the new pre-teen program was Sunday afternoon, the meeting time of the choir. We decided to run the programs simultaneously because only a small percentage of students wanted to be involved in both programs. The solution came, however, after lengthy discussions with the leadership of the youth choirs .

John Kotter's definition of leadership is helpful when considering changes in events or resource allocation. He defines leadership as "the process of moving a group (or groups) of people in the same direction through (mostly) non-coercive means."<sup>72</sup> Change demands leadership. The most important tool in making a change in existing structures or resource allocations is communication. When considering a change, the youth leader must start his or her communication with those most effected by the change. When dealing with change, large or small, people can easily become uncomfortable. It is crucial that youth leaders proceed with change slowly and prayerfully, being very sensitive to those around them.

If the youth leader is part of a large church staff, he or she should bring to the attention of the staff any proposed changes. Regardless of how small or insignificant the youth leader might consider the changes, their feed-back needs to

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<sup>72</sup> Kotter, The Leadership Factor, p. 16.

be included before any major changes are enacted. Their opinions should be heard and valued in the process.

When changes affect the allocation of money, it is imperative that those responsible for the allocation of money know that the church leadership is in agreement with the changes in the youth ministry. Otherwise, there is a risk of confusion and confrontation. It is the youth leader's responsibility to take the initiative and to open the communication between all parties involved in any monetary changes. A delay in money allocation may cause a delay in other areas of the youth ministry. To avoid this sort of roadblock, it is wise to start with the issue of money and to align the timing of changes with the funding schedule.

The leader must communicate changes with those on the youth ministry team. Discussing the progression of the changes or any difficulties in the changes will keep the youth ministry team informed.

Once a change in events or programs is agreed upon, but before it is acted upon, the youth leader will need to talk with the youth who are effected. Such a discussion could also be a great opportunity for the leader to communicate to the youth his or her God-given vision for the youth ministry. As with any change, some of the youth will agree with it and some will not. Having the youth volunteers involved in such a discussion will help validate the leader and put the youth more at ease about the proposed changes.

Calling a special parents' meeting or having a time on Sunday morning to announce an open discussion will help minimize confusion that can result from change. Including a description of the youth ministry vision in a church bulletin or newsletter will aid in the communication process. The point in talking with everyone associated with the youth ministry changes is to facilitate communication, bring unity, and create focus for the church.

Communication with the ruling body of the church is also important in that their support might be the only way a change will occur. If there is conflict caused by the changes in the youth ministry programs, an explanation from church leadership of how the proposed changes are helpful to the direction of the church may be necessary.

If the youth leader and team decide that a regularly attended event should be canceled, the leadership of the church must agree. There are many programs in churches around the country that continue to function without any clear purpose. Yet, the cancellation of such a program may cause more problems than solutions. Therefore, such a decision must be made through prayer and the counsel of the leadership of the church.

In addition to the church leadership, both parents and youth should be contacted when an event is canceled. If the program has been existing needlessly, its continuation for a short time will not be harmful. Discussion with the youth

and their parents concerning the reason for the termination and the vision of the youth ministry is another opportunity to explain where God is leading and what he is doing in the youth ministry. Having the ministry team and any of the church leadership at such a discussion is preferable. Again, it is ideal if the youth leader can have part of a Sunday morning service to announce God's activity in the youth ministry. While the cancellation of a program or event might seem to be a negative, when couched in the vision of what God is doing, it becomes a positive.

**Action Point Eleven: Making Adjustments and Communicating with Others**

- Starting with the proposed changes in financial and resource allocations for the youth ministry, meet with the governing person or body to discuss the reason for the changes. After decisions about the financial adjustments have been made, you are ready to have these changes reflected in the various programs and events the finances support.
- Along with the youth volunteers, take the approved adjustments in finances and resource allocations to see which proposed program and event adjustments can be supported or afforded. With this knowledge, list all parties involved in making the adjustments. Please refer to the questions in Appendix J regarding the moving of a regularly held program or event to help in considering all possibilities.

- Meet with all the people associated with program or event adjustment. While the communication might take some time, it is essential to insure the integrity of the leader and the unity of the ministry context. As agreement is reached, meet with the youth team and implement the beginning, moving or deleting of a program or event.
- As changes are made, include a clear description of the changed program or event's place in the overall focused vision for the youth ministry. Again, see Appendix I for an example of such a description.

#### Summary of Adjustment Phases

From the outset of this project, there has been a desire to see the youth leader grow in character, and the youth group grow in size and maturity. The project seeks to help the leader have a growing understanding of what God wants him or her to do in the local church. With growing character and integrity, the leader can communicate God's vision of the youth ministry both to the youth ministry team and to the church leadership in such a way that the vision is clarified and owned by both. When this is accomplished, the assessment of the existing programs and resources is a simple process. After the more difficult adjusting process is completed, the youth ministry will have a more focused effort. A focused youth ministry in the midst of God's vision, supported and empowered by



a unified team, will foster a spiritual depth within the ministry. If God wills, which he does<sup>73</sup>, the youth ministry will flourish.

The process of focus and adjustment are never over. The question of character is never finally answered. A believer never stops seeking the Kingdom of God or his righteousness. Communication with co-laborers and those in authority is always necessary. The youth leader must be continually aware of the Spirit's movement and direction. Phase three directs the leader to re-focus and continue the process of being led by God's Holy Spirit.

#### Phase Three: Re-Focusing on Program Modifications and Changes

Staying personally and organizationally sensitive to God's leading is not accomplished through a single act or the completion of a project. Likewise, leading a youth group is not accomplished by simply setting a direction and mindlessly following it. The *Action Points* of all three phases are designed to be on-going, not acted upon once and filed away. A growing youth ministry needs re-focused attention just as navigating a moving ship requires continual adjustments. Phase three is designed to establish the habit of re-focusing and reviewing the previously made youth ministry adjustments. Did the changes move the ministry in the direction of the vision of the youth ministry? Are there other modifications necessary due to growth or differing needs of students? These questions will be

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<sup>73</sup> 2 Peter 3:9, 2 Corinthians 6:1-2, John 3:16-17.

answered in phase three. This phase should be implemented approximately a year after the adjustments implemented in phase two.

Phase one of the project was a time of personal contemplation. Phase two was a time of examination and adjustment. Phase three is a time for ministry contemplation and personal reflection. Eugene Peterson in The Contemplative Pastor states the following regarding personal reflection and the need to be re-focused as a pastor:

With professions the integrity has to do with the invisible: for physicians it is health (not merely making people feel good); with lawyers, justice (not helping people get their own way); with professors, learning (not cramming cranial cavities with information on tap for examinations). And with pastors, it is God (not relieving anxiety, or giving comfort or running a religious establishment).<sup>74</sup>

An additional statement might be included in the quotation for youth leaders. It might read, “And with youth leaders, it is God -- particularly vision for the youth ministry in the local church (not simply running programs and executing events).” Taking the time to ask contemplative questions about the ministry and life is important. It is part of the on-going process of staying focused on God.

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<sup>74</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, The Contemplative Pastor (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), pp. 132-133.

### Re-Focusing on the Youth Leader

If the youth leader has continued in an accountability relationship, re-focusing has been on-going. Even so, setting aside a time to review accountability questions and accountability structures is helpful.

A youth leader's life may change. A new marriage, addition of children, or job changes mean it is time to re-focus. Taking time to review changes and reconsider the ministry focus and vision means making adjustments that are in line with the vision, rather than just pragmatic responses. An honest appraisal gives a chance to make the necessary modifications to the leader's personal plan for character sensitivity. There is always a possibility that various parts of the youth leader's personalized plan for being sensitive to God's leading simply may have failed. In such cases, changes need to be made. After the leader re-focuses his or her life, the challenge of re-focusing the ministry follows.

### Re-Focusing on Adjustments in Youth Ministry

After a year of offering the new pre-teen ministry at The Chapel, it was time for a review. Every fall, I set aside time to meet with the youth staff to discuss changes made the previous fall. In the fall of the 1995 school year we reviewed and were pleased to report that the pre-teen program was successful and needed to continue. We then included the choir leadership in our re-focusing process. As previously stated, the choir and the pre-teen program were meeting

simultaneously. After talking with the choir leadership, it became clear that they were frustrated with both programs being offered at the same time.

As we discussed the situation, all parties agreed that we, as staff of The Chapel, were sending a confusing signal to the students and parents of the church. Both the youth ministry and the choir ministry believed in and communicated the importance of their programs. The situation created competition and bitterness. Therefore, we decided to offer the youth pre-teen program after the choir ministry, and the choir compromised by starting their program fifteen minutes earlier. This solution took mutual compromise, but was helpful to both ministries and brought program unity to our ministry efforts at the church.

This was the type of re-focusing discussion that the Apostles had with James, Peter, and Paul at the Council of Jerusalem concerning Gentiles and the Gospel. James' conclusion after Peter, Paul and Barnabas reviewed God's activity with the Gentiles was, "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God."<sup>75</sup> Their re-focusing added clarity and unity for the cause of Christ and the expansion of the Gospel. A re-focusing of the youth ministry serves the same purpose.

There is always the possibility that changes made the previous year have simply not worked. A youth leader must honestly review the changes and be ready

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<sup>75</sup> Acts 15:1-29, especially verse 19.

to identify those that are failing. Programs that are failing need to be evaluated again. Perhaps they may need to be eliminated. Without a specific time to review the changes, the youth leader may continue a program that is not serving its original purpose and design.

In the spring of 1992, I was really struggling over the purpose of the Sunday morning high school class. After prayer and discussion with an elder, I decided to focus on evangelism. For the next year, the class prospered and grew. Some decisions for Christ were made. A year later in the fall of 1994, there was an exodus of the seniors and an influx of freshmen. The students and their needs were very different. During a time of review, it was obvious that the Sunday morning class would have to include education as well as evangelism.

Changes in the “ministry terrain” are another reason to re-focus. I define changes in the “ministry terrain” as changes in resource allocations or changes in student composition, maturity or make-up. If there is a large decline in the pre-teen population of the church, it might be impossible to offer the pre-teen program. If there is a drastic budget cut, it might be impossible to continue all events as *status quo*. A review will allow for an adequate and focused response to change that is in line with the vision of the ministry.

Another change to watch for in the “terrain” is change in youth trends that might be capitalized upon in programming. Youth culture and youth ministry is

trendy and filled with fads. Part of the re-focusing process is to look out into the horizon of the vision. George Barna, in discussing this, states, “Today, leaders are increasingly interested in cashing in resources for short-term benefits. The tragedy is that it leaves nothing in place for the long run.”<sup>76</sup> He concludes by saying, “We should pursue the vision in concert with His timing. Rather than seek quick results and tangible benefits in the short term . . . .”<sup>77</sup>

Possibly the most enjoyable aspect of a time of re-focusing is witnessing growth in the ministry. During a review, the youth leader can log increases in attendance, decisions for Christ, and other signs of growth. Bobb Biehl, author of the Master Planning Arrow, has devised a tool to help a leader track such successes.<sup>78</sup> In the Master Planning Arrow there are places to record what Biehl calls “milestones.” In recording milestones, the youth leader and youth team can see God moving the ministry in the direction of the vision. Recording growth and milestones is important to the re-focusing process. Both our pre-teen and our discipleship weekend programs were milestones and signs of growth for the youth ministry at The Chapel.

When reviewing the program changes and modifications, it is important to include the suggestions from the ministry team. A day away or a weekend

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<sup>76</sup> Barna, The Power of Vision, p. 129.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> See completed Master Planning Arrow, Appendix K.

together when there is time for rethinking, praying and thanking God will serve to re-focus the team. A unified effort in additional modifications and restatement of the vision will focus the ministry. If there is new leadership, this time will serve to graft them into the team. If there are original members of the team who made the previous changes, they will be able to reflect on how God is working in their lives and the lives of the youth.

**Action Point Twelve: Re-Focus of Ministry and the Youth Leader**

- Review your proposed adjustments in your personal life and answer the following questions.

Am I involved in an accountability relationship? If not, why not? Am I spending time in God-dominated prayer? If not, why not? Have I implemented the adjustments in my personal life that need to be made? If not, why not?

- By yourself, or with your volunteer team on a retreat, review your proposed ministry changes from phase two of the project. It might be helpful to get an organizational tool like the Master Planning Arrow for the re-focusing process. Please refer to a modified version of the Master Planning Arrow in Appendix K used by The Chapel's youth ministry for ideas on organizing ministry focus.

As you review your adjustments, answer the following questions regarding each adjustment you made in phase two.

Has the change been implemented? If not why not? Is the change still in effect? If not, why not? Is it successful and well accepted by those it affects? If not, why not? Has the change moved your ministry toward its God-given vision? If not, why not?

- Review your “ministry terrain.” Have there been any significant changes in budget, attendance, demographics, personnel, volunteers, atmosphere or culture?
- Using steps learned in phases one and two, make the necessary adjustments and re-focus your ministry.

### Conclusion

Every youth leader wants his or her youth ministry to grow numerically. Yet, even after what seems the leader’s best attempt, there may not be measurable growth or maturity. It might be because the character of the youth leader is lacking. Growth is hindered when the youth leader is not in concert with the vision God has for the group. Most tragically, however, youth ministries do not grow because the youth leader is not submissive to the church leadership over the



youth ministry. Internal conflicts between the youth leader and the leadership of the church slowly erode the effectiveness of the youth leader.

This project seeks to address these issues in a practical way that eliminate them as negative factors in the growth of a youth ministry. Phase one addresses the personal character of the youth leader, his or vision for youth ministry, and the ministry context of the youth leader. Once the youth leader is sensitive to these crucial issues, adjustments are made to the youth leader's life and ministry. These adjustments and the implementation of phase two bring the youth leader and the youth ministry in line with the vision for the ministry in his or her local church.

A youth leader whose character is being molded and led by the Spirit of God can sustain a growing youth ministry. A ministry that focuses on God's vision for it, grows at God's rate. A youth leader who is sensitive and submissive to the church context of the youth ministry allows for growth to be in conjunction with the overall maturing of the church.

The youth ministry at The Chapel on the Campus has grown both spiritually and numerically as a result of this project. There have been adjustments planned and unplanned as I have yielded to God, his vision for the youth ministry, and those he has placed in authority over me.

A youth ministry can *begin* to grow spiritually and numerically as its leader clearly focuses on the direction of God's leading while submitting to the

leadership of the church. For the growth to *continue*, however, the leader must continue to grow alongside the emerging ministry. It is imperative, therefore, that the leader and the ministry subject themselves to spiritual accountability and to times of prayer, contemplation, review and modification. Phase three is designed to aid the youth leader in his or her review, and re-focus. It is during such times that the leader, the ministry and the church are recharged and further empowered. By God's grace, he will continue to work in youth leaders, to work through them, to bring students to maturity in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINAL OUTCOMES AND RESULTS OF THE THESIS PROJECT

Outcomes and Results of Phase One: Analysis of the Youth Leader

Character

The Bible states, “In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.”<sup>1</sup> So it has been during the course of this thesis project. Character development and sensitivity for this project have primarily been a matter of falling before God in prayer and asking for His grace and mercy. Without the grace of God and the life of Christ living in me, a quest for character would be futile. Therefore, I have often prayed for “more” grace.<sup>2</sup> In this chapter a personal and detailed history of the outcomes of the thesis project will be described. End results will be assessed for further clarification.

Character Issues

The prayer questions included in Appendix A, part of the tool used for the character development of the leader, were designed to expose sinful root issues and were helpful.<sup>3</sup> I found, however, that at times the questions caused me to be more focused on myself rather than on God. While introspection is helpful, the

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<sup>1</sup> Proverbs 16:9.

<sup>2</sup> See James 4:6a.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to prayer questions, Appendix A.

youth leader must be guarded to insure that such an analysis does not become self-absorption. The desire is to see people and the ministry as God does. When this is accomplished, our sinfulness and character flaws will also be addressed.

Nevertheless, devising a set of questions uniquely designed to address my character issues was very helpful. As in any pursuit of character, there is a need for honesty. For thirty days I prayed and meditated on the questions of “self.” The process of having God reveal pride and self-centeredness took patience and time. Seeking God daily to understand and have him reveal the contents of my heart was at times painful and humbling. The process led to the development of my accountability questions.<sup>4</sup> The questions continue to stabilize my life when pressures arise. There were many accountability questions that I did not want to include on my list. I did, however, include the more self-revealing questions because, without specific and pointed questions, the list will not serve its purpose.

I found while making my list of accountability questions that there were recurring issues: pride, lust, covetousness, and fear. More than a few times in the course of the thesis project I found myself (or it was pointed out by the Holy Spirit in prayer or through an accountability relationship) trying to serve the Lord from the flesh or in fear. Character sensitivity is not, unfortunately, simply devising a plan to settle character issues. Actually, my plan at times seemed to increase the

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<sup>4</sup> Again, please refer to these questions in Appendix A.

opportunities to be self-deceiving or self-justifying. Character sensitivity, like all of the Christian life, is a moment-by-moment walk in the Spirit through faith. Having accountability questions does not change that. It does, however, give me a structure to “get back on track” when I deviate. Also, it allows someone else to use my questions to help me stay focused.

### Relationships of Accountability

Relationships of accountability, like my accountability questions, while designed to keep me honest before God, can also be a regular opportunity for self-deception or justification. For instance, sometimes I found myself avoiding or not bringing up issues for confession or counsel. Fortunately, I meet with some men who have come to know me and who insist upon asking the hard questions. Our relationship has been able to grow deeply in the past three years. The longer an accountability relationship can last, the better. The longer the relationship lasts, the more intuition is involved in the meeting of one another's needs.

Because the Lord brought my accountability partner along before the start of the thesis project, I cannot describe the result of praying for such a person. I do know that I was looking for an accountability partner for about a year before I came upon a relationship that would lend itself to this task. It is possible, therefore, that if I had started to pray for an accountability relationship when the project started, I would not have an established relationship at this point in the

project (a year later). I feel fortunate that my partner and I have the time and flexibility to meet together regularly.

The questions relating to an accountability relationship<sup>5</sup> were and are extremely helpful. Commitment to a relationship brings stability. There were various reasons over the past three years that I wanted to get out of my relationship. After reviewing the guidelines presented for relationships of accountability, I stayed. These guidelines became and continue to be the basis of commitment to such a relationship. Having a mature, Spirit-filled person concerned and committed to me through regular meetings is the basis of a good relationship of accountability. Any youth leader who seeks such qualities from a relationship of accountability will find many benefits. The only remaining issue to ensure the success of such a relationship is the openness of the youth leader and his or her desire to be held accountable.

Submission to the process of accountability has been a challenge. An accountability relationship is about openness, honesty, and love. The relationships are not necessarily about personalities and “compatibility” between the parties involved. There were, therefore, many times that I have wanted more out of my accountability partner, times when I wanted someone who would listen more or teach more, and times when I wanted someone who was more gentle in his

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<sup>5</sup> See forms in Appendix B.

rebukes. Yet, I decided to stay in the relationship. Believing that it was started and has been sustained by God has kept me going. Next to the submission (or obedience) to the relationship, I have found that there is little I can do to force the timing or insure this type of character development. It is all about God working his will in me. I know that there are some relationships and structures which lend themselves to God's working in me to develop character. My accountability relationship is one of these structures.

#### Accountability in Prayer

The most difficult process to submit to continues to be prayer. With growing regularity, however, I am convinced that praying is not simply something I should do, it is all that I can do. In prayer, and through His Word, God is able to show me areas of my character needing his touch. After confession and restoration, He touches those areas. It can be difficult to come before the Lord; it can be lonely.

I find in prayer and relationships of accountability that I would rather discuss or journal about my sin than confess it and repent. I desire to avoid the trials God often uses to produce character by believing that I can be so sensitive to character development that I will somehow be exempt from pain. I always hope to avoid this by learning the lesson before God teaches it. What I have found, however, is when I am more sensitive to God's leading, there is just as much or

more pain because of increased awareness of God's holiness. I thought I could be so close to God that I would not need a painful trial to develop my character. However, closeness to God did not shield me from pain, it simply exposed my arrogance and self-righteousness. The closer I draw to the Savior, the more I see my weak and flawed character. This is painful. It also requires more grace because my natural desire is to back out of any process or relationship that is painful. Fortunately as the youth leader grows in character, God molds the leader to handle the increased pressures of a growing youth ministry.

There is not a specific "tool" provided in the thesis for accountability in prayer. This omission is deliberate. In providing a "tool" for prayerful accountability with God, there is a risk in portraying prayer, honest communication, confession, and celebration as a program. In any relationship of accountability, there is a need on the part of all involved to be open and honest. This is true of any prayer time with the Lord. The questions provided to aid in developing accountability questions, when prayed through honestly, give a taste of what can happen in a continual and regular time in prayer with God the Father. Additionally, God himself has provided the model of prayer in the Psalms. The youth leader praying the Psalms will experience open, honest, healing prayer.

Executing this part of the thesis project reveals why there is so little provided for youth leaders regarding prayer. Providing a "tool" can work against a



free, spontaneous, and heart-driven desire to speak with and hear from God in prayer. However, it has been necessary for me to include the issues of prayer and my prayer life as part of my accountability questions.<sup>6</sup> Not only do I pray with my accountability partner, but he and I talk about my time in prayer. This type of discussion often has encouraged me to pray more openly and freely with the Lord.

### Accountability through Acts of Faith

Very seldom is accountability without action. Faith acts are a chance for the youth leader to identify those areas of life that are difficult to follow through. An act of faith could be any action.<sup>7</sup> It could be attending a meeting with an accountability partner or increased giving to the church. In seeking a vision from God, there can be many occasions for lifestyle changes, often difficult ones. The Bible says, “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.”<sup>8</sup> Acts of faith are an attempt to provide a practical action plan in the areas of life where character development is being pursued.

For this project, my faith act was to go weekly to the juvenile detention center. This activity had to do with my personal character development, but it also influenced the development of the vision for youth ministry at The Chapel on the Campus. I responded to this opportunity after prayer and counsel with a church

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<sup>6</sup> Please refer to question ten in Accountability Questions in Appendix A.

<sup>7</sup> Please refer to the completed forms, Appendix C.

<sup>8</sup> James 2:26.

elder. This faith act has placed me where I cannot depend on my previously “successful” talents. The skits, jokes and games used in the church do not work with the troubled, hurting youth at the detention center. Therefore, as the Gospel is preached and ministry is attempted, prayer and a constant awareness of the Spirit's leading is necessary.

Having to walk in the Spirit in these situations has helped me not rely on myself, but upon God's power. This act of faith has given me a broader perception of what God is doing in different parts of the city. It has also underscored the truth that ministry and evangelism have to be Spirit-empowered.

This act of faith has deeply impacted the way I now do ministry in the church. In preparations for youth meetings, I have relied more upon prayer for the moving of the Holy Spirit. Also, I have more often sought God's guidance in preparation for talks at youth meetings. In the detention center, as in the youth meetings, it is impossible to know whom God will bring in and what their needs will be. Because He knows what is ahead, I have to seek His guidance for the focus and content of the meetings.

#### Vision for Youth Ministry

This thesis project was pursued with the belief that God has a vision for every youth leader. The vision of The Chapel on the campus includes the unique setting of the church on the university campus. It also includes my gifts, talents,

and god-given dreams.<sup>9</sup> Believing that God places over youth groups leaders with a specific past and unique spiritual gifts, assumes that He has a direction and a vision for the leader in that particular setting.

### Shaping of Vision

Significant to the shaping of my vision was my conversion to Christ through the relational evangelism style of Young Life at the age of sixteen. This style of ministry and the age of my conversion has contributed greatly to how I approach ministry with the youth. Believing that building relationships is the bedrock for strong and lasting ways to communicate the love of Christ, I have continually sought to build relationships with youth. I have sought out non-Christians from various schools while maintaining a certain level of relationship with the youth currently in the youth group. Additionally, my spiritual giftedness toward evangelism has influenced the development of the vision for the youth ministry.

It was very helpful to review personal history and past events to gain an understanding of myself and how God is molding me. The process of filling out the questions provided aided in this discovery and took me about a week and a half to complete.<sup>10</sup> For some youth leaders the process could be painful. There have

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<sup>9</sup> Please review the vision statement in Appendix G.

<sup>10</sup> Refer to completed forms in Appendix D.

been many circumstances in my life which shaped and molded my character that were very painful. Selecting those experiences that have effected a youth leader can, therefore, be difficult. More difficult than pinpointing the issues and events is the process of determining their effects on present-day life. Regardless of the time necessary or the possible pain involved in evaluating past events and their value on current daily life, the understanding gained is invaluable. It is useful in understanding the passions that God is instilling in me and my ministry. Evangelism is my passion.

The vision statement for youth ministry at The Chapel on the Campus was written originally in late 1992. Modifications have been made since its original drafting. The most extensive modification to the vision statement was deliberately including college students in the volunteer base.<sup>11</sup>

Under the conviction that relationships are the best way to lead youth to Christ and to disciple them in their relationship with Christ, I communicated this dynamic to the youth ministry team. As previously stated, at the start of my involvement with youth ministry (1991) the youth team consisted mostly of parents. While this is certainly admirable in itself, parents rarely have the time or the desire to develop meaningful relationships with youth. Therefore, in the summer of 1993, the youth staff and I made a concerted effort to seek out college

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<sup>11</sup> See paragraph five of statement in Appendix G.

students for the youth ministry team. Once the decision was made to give collegiate volunteers for the youth ministry top priority, resources and time, many college students began to come forward.

Having a clear vision for the youth ministry has helped in communicating with the new members of the leadership team. Having a vision statement clarifies what the youth ministry is trying to accomplish and how we are going to accomplish it. The youth ministry's stated vision continues to be a benchmark that brings stability within the flexible context of youth ministry. Changes in the youth and the volunteers serving them constantly creates combinations of ministry that need to be brought in line with the stated vision of ministry. Without a clear vision statement as our anchor, the changes that have occurred over the past two years might have caused the ministry to drift away from where we believe God is taking it.

#### Character Development: Effects on Vision

It was obvious at the start of addressing leadership character issues that I was personally trying to develop strategies and clarify the vision through intellectual strength. I was also passing on this practice to the emerging college volunteers. After spending time in prayer concerning character issues, I realized how much of the vision was being developed out of my own effort and strength rather than relying and believing in God's power and guidance. This realization,

along with the confession of it to God, filled me with peace. Letting go of the belief that I was able and responsible to produce the results allowed me to rest. Resting in God's ability gives me freedom to seek his direction and movement as he develops and accomplishes his vision for the youth ministry at The Chapel. Confession and repentance from my agenda and expectations allowed me to be sensitive to the gentle leading and spiritual discernment of the Lord.

#### The Youth Leader's Understanding of the Church Context

At The Chapel on the Campus, I have been allowed to direct and run the youth ministry with a great deal of freedom and autonomy. It is my desire to have the youth ministry vision more integrated into the larger vision of the church. I have pursued some integration, but there is no compulsion on the part of the church leadership to become seriously involved in the process. Because I believe this type of integration should be initiated by the governing leadership of the church, I have not forced the issue. I have, however, gone on to lead the ministry in the direction of God's leading. I am constantly communicating with the church leadership concerning the direction of the youth ministry and am always open to their suggestions.

#### Staff Changes during Thesis Project

Upon The Chapel's hiring of me as youth leader, I communicated to the leadership the need for an additional part-time staff worker. This person was hired

and was assigned as the part-time junior high and pre-teen worker. Since that point we have been praying and communicating with each other regarding vision and strategies in the youth ministry. Since the start of the thesis project, however, there have been several staff changes at The Chapel that have created the possibility of my job description changing. In an annual review of my job performance and description, it has surfaced that my current responsibilities may now change. Clarification of my job description is still unclear as of the time of this writing.

During the changes in the church staff and ministry responsibility, there has been a great deal of discussion concerning the vision of individual ministries. It is my prayer and hope that as my job description and responsibilities are discussed with the leadership of The Chapel on the Campus, there will be a time to clarify these issues more fully, especially as they relate to the youth ministry.

Many of the principles of the project will be drawn upon during this period of transition at The Chapel. In the meantime, however, the youth ministry will continue to function with its current level of autonomy. Additionally, communication with the church leadership will be maintained to insure that they know and can participate as they desire in the strategies and direction of the youth ministry.

Finally, I believe that this thesis project has improved my leadership abilities and skills. I believe that these improvements have prepared me to consider a wider scope of responsibilities at The Chapel on the Campus. The character strength and ministry focus have given me more opportunity to handle greater areas of responsibility in ministry.

#### Outcomes and Results of Phases Two and Three: Adjustments and Review of Adjustments of Ministry in Light of the Vision

The adjustments and their review have given the youth ministry increased focus. As stated in chapter four, the re-focusing of the specific direction of the senior high Sunday school class has allowed the youth ministry to stay within the vision of the youth ministry and tuned to needs of the students. The adjusting process initially brought the class to focus upon evangelism. A year later (1993) in a time of re-focusing, it was obvious that the needs of the students had changed and were now in the area of Christian education. Both the initial adjustments and the re-focusing effort were very helpful to this Sunday morning program.

Mid-week meetings were strengthened in the same way. Because these meetings are at a time other than Sunday morning, many of the teenagers attend because they want to, not because their parents are making them come. They have a level of self-directed enthusiasm about being there. This makes a vast difference in the composition and atmosphere of the meeting.



All of the mid-week meetings have as their focus exposing the youth to Jesus Christ. This is not restricted to evangelism *per se* but also includes all pre-evangelism exposure. Clarifying the focus for these meetings has enabled the youth ministry to move in a singular direction over a sustained period of time. Many students have observed these new parameters and often bring their non-Christian friends to hear the Gospel. The youth volunteers are frequently reminded of the purpose and direction of the mid-week meetings.

#### Elimination and Additions

As designed in phases two and three, there may be the need to make eliminations and additions to the programs of the youth ministry. One such addition was the small group ministry. Part of the stated vision for the youth ministry is to disciple our believing youth. It was observed in the 1993-1994 school year that there was no concerted effort to develop a discipleship program. We moved in the direction of finding a solution.

In the spring of 1993, a critique of the senior high programs was made in light of the written vision statement for the youth ministry. The youth ministry team realized that avenues for “Equipping Kids for Christ” were not adequately being provided.<sup>12</sup> After making the decision to use a format of small groups,

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<sup>12</sup> See Vision Statement, Appendix G.

various hurdles had to be overcome. Initially, the program required new scheduling with the students as well as the leaders for the groups.

Believing that small groups were of major importance, the leadership initially addressed the scheduling problem by cancelling half of the Wednesday night meetings. This scheduling shift allowed for small groups to meet every other week and the regular Wednesday meetings to meet on the alternate dates. This seemed to be the optimum way to meet the scheduling demands for the leaders and the students at the same time. However, the result was a decline in the regular weekly meeting due to its sporadic schedule. Therefore, in a time of re-focusing before the 1994-1995 school year, the Wednesday meeting was re-established on a regular weekly basis. This meant that the small groups had to be moved to a different day; Sunday afternoon was chosen as the new time.

As with the Sunday school class focus, the small group program has gone through a refining process. The refining process is definitely considered Spirit-led. In both cases, the focus of the ministry has not changed. What has changed, and will continue to change, are the students, the leadership and the needs of all involved.

### Leadership Training

Armed with a clear vision for the youth ministry, the youth staff was then faced with how to move the ministry in the direction of that vision. Repeatedly,

the problems in moving the ministry toward that direction revolved around the lack of volunteers. The lack of volunteers was easily detected and obviously felt as the various youth events were understaffed and in need of more help. Yet, it was not until the lack of volunteers was diagrammed at a reviewing session with the aid of the Master Planning Arrow that our need to respond was fully realized.<sup>13</sup> Once the need was mapped out, it was more obvious that “clearing” this one “roadblock” could benefit many areas of the youth ministry.

It was obvious that leadership recruitment and training would take valuable time away from an already overwhelmed schedule and staff. Therefore, to pursue volunteers, care for them and train them, would require a concerted effort to redirect time and change priorities. After praying and planning about the issue, the youth ministry committed itself to a weekly meeting. Sunday nights were chosen as the time for weekly “leadership meetings.” Initially, we ate a meal together each week. This was done to encourage fellowship and attendance. The meeting continues to be a time of worship and instruction from the Scriptures. Starting with three or four college students in 1993, there are now fifteen to eighteen.

Caring for and training college students has developed into a ministry of its own. Nevertheless, as they are cared for, the collegians in turn care for the youth in the various youth programs. These students have provided the enthusiasm,

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<sup>13</sup> See Master Planning Arrow, column four, “Roadblocks,” Appendix K. At one point, “volunteers needed” filled the entire column.

energy, and creativity for the youth group meetings. They have provided the means to meet and disciple more students than was ever possible with the youth staff. While the initial steps involved in leadership development were exhausting, the dividends have been enormous.

As the collegiate volunteer team began to emerge, I decided to have a leadership training weekend. This was the fall of 1993. The vision for the youth ministry was presented at that time. Because the team had not been grounded in a philosophy of ministry, they were not ready for the vision. Therefore, at the second leadership weekend (summer of 1994) the ground work for the philosophy was laid out. After that weekend and for the consecutive Sunday night leadership meetings in the fall of 1994, the philosophy of ministry was taught.<sup>14</sup> At the end of 1994 a training weekend was held to present the vision of ministry in light of the philosophy. With a better understanding of who does ministry and how it is done, pursuit of the vision has been more unified.

In addition to the development of a small group and volunteer leadership development program, an evangelism outreach called "Campus Rock!" has been added to the senior high program. This night is designed for students to bring their non-Christian friends to hear and respond to the Gospel. Another addition to the

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<sup>14</sup> The actual lessons are reproduced in Appendix F.

ministry has been to bring a service emphasis to the junior high ministry. One night a month is set aside to lead the junior high youths toward a servant's attitude.

### Outstanding Additions

A major benefit for constructing a vision for ministry is that it continually provides direction for action. As such, the vision for the youth ministry at The Chapel encompasses things which have yet to be actualized. One of those is plans for a prayer ministry in the future.

Prayer is a powerful change agent like no other. It has been difficult to encourage a ministry of simple prayer for youth. Developing a strategy for a youth prayer ministry continues to motivate me to pray and seek God's leading about mobilizing others for prayer.

Currently, the leadership meetings have an increasing amount of time designated for prayer. It is important to begin focusing the emerging volunteer team on prayer. This is character revealing and an expression of dependence upon God that changes the lives of youth. In 1992 the youth ministry arranged a prayer booklet for the youth team and the congregation at large. In the booklet prayer requests for the Sunday school teachers and other volunteers were recorded. This prayer booklet is being recompiled after the church's development of a comprehensive churchwide prayer meeting. The desire is to have increased

intercession for youth in our church and city. Without the prayer support of others, I believe the youth ministry is missing a vital church support.

### Continual Ministry Vision Focus

Part of the reviewing process is a continual re-focusing of the vision. Has the environment of the ministry changed? How have the changes in the youth ministry team affected the vision? What is God doing in the larger context of the church body? These key questions keep a youth leader before God in prayer.

An example of a what God is doing in the larger context of The Chapel is a growing sensitivity to race relations. The catalyst was a gathering of Christian men in Dallas, Texas to which The Chapel sent eighty men. The conference focused on racial reconciliation. The conference's effect on the church congregation, plus my exposure to the detention center (where most of the students are African-American), has created a clear direction from God. A result is my focus on a predominately African-American high school in the community. While there are some students from this school in the youth ministry, none of these students are African-American. The pursuit of God concerning the vision for the youth ministry and the issue of race is currently an unfolding scenario.

A continual review, re-focus and re-evaluation of an existing vision-direction can only create increasing clarity. Having a direction, an initial focus from God, however, gives the re-evaluation synergy. The energy produced from

the evaluation process carries a youth leader through change, creating more energy. That same energy can motivate a team that has experienced answers to prayer and experienced the power of being included in God's movement in the lives the youth.

While many of the outcomes of this thesis have yet to unfold, many lessons have been and are being learned. Without a time to reflect on what the outcomes mean, much of the value of the project would be lost. Therefore, the next chapter reflects on the lessons learned, possible changes in the future execution of this project, and the overall implications of the project.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY REFLECTIONS OF THE THESIS PROJECT

This chapter is designed to take the outcomes of the thesis project and learn from them. Additionally, the chapter is designed to point out the overall value of the project for anyone considering its execution. The summary will follow the three-phase project design. Four evaluative questions have been asked of each step and its components. First, what was learned? Second, what would be changed in light of what was learned, if the project were to be done again? Third, what are the implications of what was learned for other youth leaders, youth workers and volunteers? And finally, what is the value of the specific lessons learned to others involved in youth ministry?

#### Summary Reflections of Phase One: Analysis of the Youth Leader

The most outstanding lesson learned in relation to character development was that prayer and faith are central to these issues and, therefore, to the entire project. The accountability in prayer is the root, the foundation, the footing for a heart open before God. Also learned was that prayer was the hardest work of any represented in the project. This was suggested at the outset of the project but the extent of the centrality of prayer was underestimated. Coming before God, seeking him and his kingdom cannot be considered a project but a surgery of the soul. In



of Christ's payment, making the way to God. Still before God, a youth leader can receive God's vision and clearly see his or her character. Before God and his holiness, the youth leader is empowered. There is no substitute for being with God in prayer. While there are many personal growth aspects attached to prayer, it is a central aspect of leadership. Biblical leadership is nothing without prayer.

Without prayer the youth leader cannot understand God's vision and plan for the ministry or church context. Prayer is the point of convergence for all assumptions of this project. As such, it is crucial that the youth leader be reflectively, aggressively, and leisurely absorbed in prayer. Prayer is the linking factor between the leader, the leader's vision and the leader's context.

Because prayer seems so enigmatic and elusive, it takes faith to bend a knee before God. Prayer is rarely seen in publication as absolutely essential to leadership in ministry. It is also certainly not a frequent topic of conversations for many youth leaders. Therefore, it takes an enormous step of faith for any youth leader to commit the time and energy it takes to develop a growing, intimate relationship with God through prayer. Prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit, however, has emerged as the foundational element of the project.

Because it is so easy to play religious games, rather than seek God, faith in God and prayer can be effortlessly substituted with business. Eugene Peterson addresses how a lack of faith and prayer can affect a ministry leader:

In our personal faith we believe that God has created, saved, and blessed us. In our ministerial vocation we embark on a career of creating, saving, and blessing on behalf of God. We become Christians because we are convinced that we need a Savior. But the minute we enter into a life of ministry, we set about acting on behalf of the Savior.

In our zeal to proclaim the Savior and enact his commands, we lose touch with our own basic and daily need for the Savior. At first it is nearly invisible, this split between our need for the Savior and our work for the Savior.<sup>1</sup>

Without faith in accountability, God and prayer, the youth leader will abandon many acts of faith. He or she may also grow tired of the time, energy and embarrassment involved in relationships of accountability. Without the belief that such a relationship is essential to personal growth, stability and leadership, any such relationship will likely fade. In arrogance and disbelief, a youth leader could abandon the people and issues of a church context believing that his or her agenda is the only one that matters. Without faith “it is impossible to please God.”<sup>2</sup> Without faith it becomes very difficult to pursue God and his vision for ministry. It will cause the youth leader to persevere with hope in the face of adversity. Faith in God’s leading allows the youth leader to stay focused and not wander about responding to every trend in youth ministry programs.

A helpful change in phase one of the thesis project would be to discuss the leader’s prayer life not as a part of a project but as a lifestyle change. Part of the

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<sup>1</sup> Eugene Peterson, Under the Unpredictable Plant (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), pp. 113-114.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 11:6.

project's design is to step back from the strategies of youth ministry and look intently at the foundational issues. Prayer is difficult to discuss because it is a heart issue rather than a head issue. Prayer "in the middle voice" is what Eugene Peterson calls prayer when it is moved from a head issue to a heart issue:

Prayer and spirituality feature participation, the complex participation of God and the human, his will and our wills. We are involved in the action and participate in its results but do not control or define it (middle voice). Prayer takes place in the middle voice.<sup>3</sup>

Along these same lines, another change that would benefit phase one is to extend the prayer elements throughout the parts of the project. Prayer with a volunteer ministry team concerning the vision of the ministry should be encouraged more. Every meeting of the youth ministry leadership should begin with prayer concerning God's direction for the ministry. Additionally, prayer with the church leadership regarding God's direction for the youth ministry should be one of the initial actions encouraged in the project.

Without question an outstanding implication of phase one is that the Lord is the source of all the elements involved. He is the one who builds character into the youth leader.<sup>4</sup> As soon as a youth leader focuses on something other than God and His planned purpose, the leader will begin to drift into a sea of confusion. God's

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<sup>3</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, The Contemplative Pastor (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> See Ephesians 2:10 and 2 Corinthians 3:18.

love for youth is greater than a youth leader's could ever be. Therefore, the youth leader must seek to tap into the source of love, God the Father.

In the daily struggles of pressures and temptations particularly associated with youth ministry, a youth leader must remember that God is the source of any solution, purpose, or plan. His love and example of reconciliation is the salve that can heal wounded relationships between a youth leader and those with whom he or she works. Daily, contemplative attention to God is essential to character and vision.

God is the center from which the youth leader works. The youth leader must remember that he is the servant seeking to do the will of God. Most literature addressing leadership places the leader central to everything. Christian leadership, however, is first "follow-ship," or "servant-ship." The leader must follow and seek the guidance of God. The implementation of another's plan, with another's power, truly places the youth leader in the role of a servant. As such, there is a need for character, integrity, and humility to serve with a pure heart.

Finally, a major value for others relating to phase one of the project is an increased life span for youth leaders in the area of youth ministry. Growing in character, with an increasingly clear vision and direction, allows a leader to focus. Character gives increasing assurance of a forward movement to the focus of the vision. The focus of vision begins to have a positive effect on the peripheral

vision the leader has for the youth ministry. With an increased focus, the leader is free not to respond to every criticism, suggestion and program that comes along. The leader gains confidence in God's guidance that can add years to the ministry life span of the leader.

An increased life span means an increasing perspective on ministry. This perspective with a maturing youth leader means seasoned leadership. A seasoned youth leader, with increasing clarity and purpose concerning the direction of the youth ministry, will likely mean a maturing and growing youth ministry. A youth leader growing in character can handle a growing youth ministry. I feel this has happened during this project. The youth ministry at The Chapel has grown numerically and spiritually as a result of increased character sensitivity.

### Vision for Ministry

Seeking God's vision for youth ministry in a local church forces the youth leader to learn to rely and depend upon God. This is often a hard lesson to learn. Abiding in Christ is the continued reliance upon him, his power, his plan, and his purpose.<sup>5</sup> When it comes to the direction and leading of the Lord, there is a daily awakening to see where the pillar of cloud is moving and where God is leading.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See John 15:1-15.

<sup>6</sup> See Exodus 13:21.

Seeking God's vision for the youth ministry in a local church is a character-forming process. The leader is unable to know the leading of the Lord without a regular time in prayer both alone and with others. Seeing God's vision for the ministry means a continual reliance upon God and his Holy Spirit. Otherwise, he or she is liable to slowly veer off God's intended course.

Also learned was that discernment of vision takes time. It takes time and experience for a youth leader to know and understand his or her spiritual gifts, talents and passions. Because all of these are part of a leader's makeup, they will also be part of God's vision solution. Self-understanding is not the only aspect in the struggle for vision clarity. More than likely, the greatest hindrance to a clear vision is the cluttering agendas and assumptions a youth leader can bring into any ministry situation. The process of seeking God's vision is often an experience in abandonment of personal dreams and self-gratifying aspirations.

A change, therefore, to this part of phase one of the project would be to create a set of questions to take the youth leader through the examination of any preconceived ideas regarding ministry and vision, possibly starting with some of the assumptions that the Apostle Peter made about ministry while he was with the Lord Jesus. In a similar manner, the forms used for self-examination could be emphasized more strongly. The purpose of the tool is not only for understanding

what God has been doing in the leader's life but also for surfacing possible selfish tendencies and habits.

The overall implication regarding vision is that it takes time. It takes time and experience to sort through personal agendas and dreams and begin to hear God's directing and guiding voice. Therefore, it is helpful for a youth leader to be in one place working through some of the issues of vision, character and ministry for two or three years (depending upon previous experience).

Seeking God's vision for ministry can enable youth leaders to begin to draw a focus on the ministry God has given them. As any person of a multi-staffed church seeks clarity of vision, such a search will positively affect the activities of the others. Minimal involvement in the overall vision of the church by the youth leader may be the synergist for others on the church staff or lay leadership to seek to understand the church context and a broader vision for their ministry area.

As staff members understand each of their places in the focus and movement of their church, the ministry of the church is more effective. The youth leader's desire to understand God's vision for his or her particular area of ministry may encourage others to do the same. If such a series of events were to happen, lay leaders and involved members also may be drawn into a new understanding of God's direction for their church.

### Ministry Context

It has said that the Church is not an organization but a living organism. This phrase adequately explains a youth leader's constantly changing context of ministry. There are changes in the youth group composition, new students and volunteers every year. With such changes, there are changes in the needs of the students. Additionally, new volunteers bring changes as they teach and lead with their own personal styles and flair. There may even be staff changes at the church that could affect the youth ministry. All such changes can make any analysis of the ministry context difficult.

Therefore, a change in this aspect of phase one of the project would be to focus the youth leader on issues, structures and people that are less likely to change. The more stable elements of ministry context will be the elements that define the needs that God will seek to address in His vision for ministry. In the future, therefore, a youth leader might be encouraged to spend time with those staff and volunteers who have been involved in the church (not only the youth ministry) for many months or years. Another helpful change would be for the youth leader to spend time with the senior pastor because the senior pastor's vision will affect all areas of church.

The major implication for the youth leader is that he or she be a loving and supportive member of the church. Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you



are my disciples, if you love one another.”<sup>7</sup> Those inside and outside of the church will know the reality of a youth leader’s faith as they observe the leader loving others on the staff and those in leadership roles. To begin to understand the church context, the leader must operate from and be motivated by love.

In the context of love, submission to the church leadership’s vision is possible. Love for the others on a church staff creates an atmosphere conducive to modifications in the youth ministry that may affect other ministries of the church. Without love, the pronouncement of God’s vision by the youth leader may simply sound like a clanging symbol.<sup>8</sup> This love comes not from effort but a continual relationship with God.

The value for the youth leader seeking to understand his or her context is learning the importance of leadership in initiating relationships. This is especially true for the youth leader seeking to build relationships with church leadership and members of a ministry team. God took the initiative with humanity in sending his Son to solve the problem caused by sin. From this biblical example, the youth leader must understand that the execution of an all-encompassing project will require initiating relationships with a mentor, with team members and with the leadership of the local church.

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<sup>7</sup> John 13:35.

<sup>8</sup> See 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

### Summary Reflections of Phase Two: Adjustments of Current Ministry Structures

The major lesson learned in phase two was the difficulty in identifying all activities involved in youth ministry. Often the issues to be considered in the adjustment process are only those scheduled programs that happen regularly. There are, however, many hours of a youth leader's week that are not linked to those activities.

Therefore, a change in phase two of the thesis project would be to provide more thought-provoking questions and suggestions in the analysis of the youth leader's appointment book, not just scheduled activities at the church. After looking over my own schedule, I realized how much time I spent talking with college volunteers who just "dropped in." Realizing these situations will occur, I am mentally prepared to make sure that the time is not just a social visit, but a part of leadership training and discipleship.

Obviously, one implication from this analysis is that the youth leader's life should also reflect the vision that God is giving him or her relating to the youth ministry in the church. Everything that the youth leader does is open to analysis in light of the vision that God is unfolding.

The value gained from such an understanding is that God's vision for ministry will use the leader's unique gifts and dreams. Additionally, the vision will infiltrate all areas of the leader's life. There will not be a dichotomy of

personal and professional life. God will begin to use all the leader is and does to accomplish the vision. The youth leader's life may contribute to his or her understanding of God's vision for the youth ministry. This is part of the reason that a study and analysis of the leader's past is helpful. Confidence is gained in knowing that God will bring the particular aspects of past failures, triumphs, personality and giftedness together with His vision.

### Summary Reflections of Phase Three: Reviewing Modifications

The lesson immediately learned in the review process was that a premature review of a modifications does not give enough time for the modifications to reflect their effectiveness. Therefore, more encouragement should be given to keeping modifications in place for a full nine to twelve months before major changes are again considered. If the modifications were made in faith, then a continued belief in God's leading will enable modifications to stay in place until the reviewing process is planned.

The implications of the review process are many. First, the true effectiveness of the modifications may never be known to the youth leader and the youth ministry team. Secondly, the ministry, both participants and leadership, can become discouraged and overwhelmed from too many changes. Finally, a premature review may lead the youth leader to make a hasty change in scheduling or priorities which frustrates the youth and their parents. These changes can give

the impression that the direction of the youth ministry is unclear to the youth leader and the leadership of the ministry.

A youth leader can commit to the duration of a proposed review and be free to operate under the modifications even if there are momentary complications. The value of the review process is that the youth leader sees that with time, any complications that arise may work themselves out. If the process is short circuited, then the full impact of the modifications (and the issues in God directing the modifications) will either be postponed or never known.

### Conclusion

In summarizing the reflections of the thesis project and its value to others, three areas stand out. First, prayer is the gateway to God's vision and to keeping personal character and integrity in check. As such, prayer must remain central in the life of the youth leader. Secondly, character development and capturing God's vision takes time. There are no shortcuts to this process. Therefore, a relaxed and steady pace in ministry must be established. Finally, loving relationships are central to ministry. The youth leader should be growing in his or her relationship with the Lord, the church leadership, the youth volunteers and the youth, all of whom make up the context of ministry. Part of the youth leader's relationship with the overall leadership of the church includes submission and communication with that leadership. This will both broaden and deepen the youth leader's vision

for the church and youth ministry. When these three areas are in concert with God's vision for the church and youth ministry, growth is freed from the hindering character flaws, confused direction and tense relationships. The youth ministry can, therefore, bloom and grow.

## APPENDIXES

### Appendix A: Defining Character Issues

Phase One: *Analysis of the Youth Leader*

Time: *30-60 Days*

Purpose: *Defining Character Issues*

How is character developed? This is a hard question to answer. This project seeks to guide the youth leader in a personal analysis of his or her character. In the analysis, it is imperative that the youth worker be as prayerfully honest as possible.

Prayer: In the next 30-60 days the youth leader is to develop a prayer life focused on the character issues for this project: accountability with God through prayer and personal accountability with another person.

Getting Honest: Jeremiah 17:9 states that the “heart is deceitful above all things.” Proverbs 4:23 states, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” Because the heart is as it is, a series of questions will be prayed, seeking direction of the heart. At the root of all sin is a desire to be God or “like God.” This is PRIDE. Therefore, over the next 30-60 days the following questions will be prayed over while asking God to reveal sin in any areas of your life or ministry. Psalm 139:23-24 states, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

As you pray through these questions, take notes in the space provided or in a personal journal. Also, as the Lord speaks to you about issues related to the questions, jot down any verses that are helpful in the space provided.

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### **Prayer Questions To Be Completed**

1. How have I been *self-assertive* lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses:

2. How have I been *self-exalting* lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses: Phil. 2:3-4

3. How have I been *self-protective* lately? Motivated out of fear?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses: 1John 4:18

4. How have I been *self-pleasing* lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses:

5. How have I been *self-confident* lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses: 2 Cor. 3:5

6. How have I been *self-competent* lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses: 2 Cor. 3:5

7. How have I been *self-reliant* lately?

Notes / Thoughts

Verses: Proverbs 3:5-6

8. How have I been *self-glorifying* lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses:

9. How have I been *self-justifying* lately?

Notes / Thoughts :

Verses: Matt. 15:1-20

10. How have I been *self-serving* lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses:

11. How have I been *comparing myself* to others lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses:

12. How have I been in *self-pity* lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses:

13. How have I been *self-sufficient* (trying to live without God, trying to be “like God”) lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses: John 15:5, Proverbs 3:5-6, Is. 55:8-9

14. How have I been motivated out of *self-shame*? Have I wanted to punish myself?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses: 1John 2:2

15. How have I been trying to *self-control* my circumstances (as compared to controlling my own actions) lately?



Notes / Thought:

Verses: John 3:8

*(List your own questions)*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

**Completed Forms**  
**Completed Prayer Questions**

1. How have I been ***self-asserting*** lately?

Notes / Thoughts: *Bringing issues in front of the whole church staff that only needed to be raised with one person. I did it in front of the staff to win their support and bring pressure upon the person who was responsible.*

Verses:

2. How have I been ***self-exalting*** lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses: Phil. 2:3-4

3. How have I been ***self-protective*** lately? Motivated out of fear?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses: 1John 4:18

4. How have I been ***self-pleasing*** lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses:

5. How have I been ***self-confident*** lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses: 2 Cor. 3:5

6. How have I been ***self-competent*** lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses: 2Cor. 3:5

7. How have I been *self-reliant* lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses: Proverbs 3:5-6

8. How have I been *self-glorifying* lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses:

9. How have I been *self-justifying* lately?

Notes / Thoughts: *Putting myself above another to make me feel good.*

Verses: Matt. 15:1-20

10. How have I been *self-serving* lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses:

11. How have I been *comparing myself* to others lately?

Notes / Thoughts: *I have been comparing numbers with other youth groups.*

Verses:

12. How have I been in *self-pity* lately?

Notes / Thoughts:

Verses:

13. How have I been *self-sufficient* (trying to live without God, trying to be “like God”) lately?

Notes / Thoughts: *If I can just fully understand all the issues and be able to put the pieces of youth ministry together in the proper way, I will be successful. This is no longer Christianity but Gnosticism. The more I know, the better I am at it.*

Verses: John 15:5, Proverbs 3:5-6, Is. 55:8-9

14. How have I been motivated out of *self-shame*? Have I wanted to punish myself?

Notes / Thoughts: *I've found myself getting caught up in comparison with other churches and other staff members. After realizing it, rather than praying and repenting, I've punished myself for it for a number of days. Not only is this wrong, it kills the days.*

Verses: 1John 2:2

15. How have I been trying to *self-control* my circumstances (as compared to controlling my own actions) lately?

Notes / Thoughts: *With possible role / staff changes, I have been trying to control.*

Verses: John 3:8

*(List your own questions)*

***Issues as they have come up through prayer and meditation.***

1. *I fear failure:* *I wrongly believe my standing as a Child of God and my worth as a youth leader are dependent upon my performance. 1John 4:18 Am I receiving God's love?*
2. *Ministry is just a matter of more and better understanding:* *I wrongly assume that if I could just more fully understand, devise and plan a strategy that my ministry would explode numerically. John 15:5 Am I abiding in Christ or myself? Which will produce the fruit? Proverbs 3:5-6!!*
3. *I want the glory:* *Often my desire to see kids lives changed is not for them but how it will reflect upon me -- not God's glory but my glory. Pride, James 4:6-10.*

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Accountability Questions

Kevin McKee

Revised:

03/05/96 2:29 PM

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1. How is your relationship with the Lord? Describe what he is teaching you and doing in your life since we last met?
2. Is there any sin in your life that is not confessed? Any relationships that are broken that need to be reconciled? When do you plan to get with the person?
3. Are you punishing yourself for a sin rather than receiving the forgiveness of Christ?
4. Honestly describe your relationship with Mary? Are you engaging in meaningful conversation with her? Are you praying with her? Would she say that you've been helping parent the children?
5. Are you spending one-on-one time with Monica and Stewart? Are you talking about the Lord as a family at the table or before bedtime? Describe some of those times.
6. Have I been or asked someone else to be inappropriately vulnerable in something I said or did? What was it?
7. How has your decision making been motivated out of **fear** rather than love and faith? (1 John 4:18, Rom. 14:23, 2 Cor. 5:14, Heb. 11:6) This can be in relation to ministry decisions and family decisions. What is it that you fear in these areas?
8. Are you striving to do ministry in the flesh? Are you working from a performance perspective, or because of the Spirit living in you? If you are trying to win someone's approval, whose is it? Why is their approval more important to you than God's?
9. Where is your **pride** most evident in your life?
10. Are you seeking to perfect ministry through your ability to understand rather than by relying and abiding? (John 15:5, Proverbs 3:5-6)
11. Honestly describe your thought life to me. Has your lust been expressed in any inappropriate ways this week? (See questions 4)

12. Are you taking your day off or is your mind at work while your body is at home?  
Are you taking care of yourself? When was the last time you exercised?
13. How is your prayer life? Describe some of the things you've been praying about  
and how you've experienced God in your times of prayer.
14. Are you lying to me in any answers to these questions?

### Appendix B: Relationships of Accountability

Phase One: *Analysis of the Youth Leader*

Time: *30-60 Days*

Purpose: *Establish Personal Accountability Relationships*

While praying for God to reveal character issues, the youth leader will be praying for a relationship of personal accountability. Eugene Peterson says about a spiritual direction in relation to a spiritual director, "Spiritual Direction is the act of paying attention to God, calling attention to God, being attentive to God in a person or circumstance or situation."<sup>\*\*</sup> The character issues to be addressed in this relationship are being raised through contemplative, heart-searching prayer. God will provide a specific relationship to handle the issues being revealed. This person will aid in directing the youth leader's attention to God. As the youth leader seeks God concerning his heart and lets someone else in on this, that person can encourage attention to God.

#### *Requirements for the Relationship of Accountability*

***It starts with you!*** For the youth leader desiring a relationship of accountability, there must first be the *desire* to be held accountable. A relationship of accountability is not one-sided in which someone interrogates another, forcing him or her to face his or her character flaws. The *desire* for accountability precedes the relationship of accountability. The desire is not to achieve perfection. It is motivated out of a love for Christ and a deep conviction to be set apart for God, to be holy. It is a desire to glorify God both in life and ministry. Therefore, as the leader prays, the question must be asked, "Do I *want* to be held accountable for issues God is exposing through prayer?" If the answer is yes, an accountability relationship will be helpful. If the answer is no, then the relationship will not help as much.

***It is by God's Grace!*** God reveals our true character as we pray and ask Him (Psalm 139:23-24). He will also expose our *desire* to be held accountable. There are those issues that require real honesty before the Lord. God may reveal an area that you do not desire to release, a sin that you love. At this point, you may need to cry out to God for "more grace" (James 4:6a). It might be that you ask the Lord to take even the desire away.

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<sup>\*\*</sup>Eugene H. Peterson, Under the Unpredictable Plant (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), p. 181.














***Lord, I'm willing  
to be made willing.***






In this process, God will also prepare you for a relationship of accountability. While the prayer exercise is designed for 30-60 days, it might take 10 or 45 to get to the root issues.

***It takes another caring person!*** Everyone wants someone to take an interest in him. This is especially true for many youth workers. There is a great desire among many believers to “be disciplined.” While such a relationship may include some level of accountability, this relationship is primarily focused on accountability. Therefore, it will be helpful to clarify what is being sought after and what is not being sought after in such a relationship.

*You are not necessarily looking for someone . . .*

-  who is much older than you
-  who is a leader in your church
-  who is in vocational ministry
-  who “knows” more than you
-  who has “discipled” others
-  who is of the same sex<sup>1</sup>
-  who struggles with the same issues
-  who struggles with different issues
-  who is a gifted counselor
-  who is a “discipler”
-  who is a “spiritual director”

*You are looking for someone . . .*

-  who is maturing in his or her faith
-  who is “filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18)
-  who is deeply concerned about you
-  who can spend regular (weekly) time with you
-  whom you respect

These guidelines are intended to help you see past pre-existing ideas about a relationship of accountability. As the Lord leads, you might find that He is taking you

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<sup>1</sup> This is not to suggest that someone of the opposite sex is preferable. More than likely an accountability partner will be someone of the same sex.

to someone whom you would never have chosen. The person may even need to be informed as to what you mean by accountability.

Because you are seeking to be held accountable for your own personal integrity, it is necessary for *you* to articulate the issues for which you seek to be held accountable. These issues, of course, will emerge through prayer. After you have the core issues for which you need to be held accountable, communicate those issues to the person to whom God is leading you.

Appendix C: Faith Acts

Phase One: *The Leader*

Time: *30-60 Days*

Purpose: *Personal Accountability through Faith Acts.*

Through prayer, reflection and journalling, the Lord will begin revealing character areas that need attention. In addition to articulation of the issues in the form of accountability questions, there may need to be some adjustment in lifestyle that demands acts of faith. James says, "Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do" (James 2:18b). For example, after praying you might realize that you have very little compassion for the poor. While God's Spirit might be working on you in this regard, it is hard to have an accountability partner ask about compassion. "Are you growing in compassion?" is unlikely to be an accountability question that you can answer. Therefore, for some character issues it might be necessary to exercise faith acts. Another way to say this is to "Get out of your comfort zone." Once you have realized that you lack compassion for the poor, you would obviously pray about it. It might also be necessary to act in faith. The Lord might continue to urge you to minister to the poor on a weekly basis. Such an activity might be "out of your comfort zone." The desire to be involved with the poor is not to demonstrate a great resolve. It is to place yourself in a position where you trust God. In faith, through prayer and counsel, you decide to involve yourself in a certain way which strengthens your faith as it is related to a prayer-revealed character issue.

This activity is in no way designed to produce the fruit of the Spirit in the soil of the flesh. These acts of faith are prayer-led. They are prompted by the Lord and have to do with your acting in faith. Other examples might include: giving money when you seemingly do not have enough for daily needs, or taking a weekly Sabbath. You might commit to doing no church work because you want to exercise faith concerning God's ability to "watch the shop."

If you feel you will not be able to complete the activities that you feel God is leading you into, make them an ongoing part of the accountability between you and your accountability partner.

---

**Faith Acts  
Reflection Journal**

---

Over the next 30-60 days, as you pray about character questions, ask the Lord to show character areas that require actions of faith. As He does, write them down and begin to ask Him how you might respond.

**Faith Issues and Possible Responses:**

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~~~~~

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**Faith Issues  
A 9-Month Plan of Action**

---

Believing that God is leading you into an area of action regarding a revealed character issue, list out your faith-response in the action plan below.

The character issue:

Beginning Date:

Ending Date:

The faith action:

The person asking about my plan and related character issue:

---

Weekly I will . . .

Monthly I will . . .

Quarterly I will . . .

---

---

**Faith Acts**  
**Completed Reflection Journal**

---

Over the next 30-60 days, as you pray about character questions, ask the Lord to show character areas that require actions of faith. As He does, write them down and begin to ask Him how you might respond.

**Faith Issues and Possible Responses:**

- ☞ *Going where few are going? The youth Detention Center -- weekly, before football game contact work on Fridays.*
- ☞ *Taking my day-off, off! This "time off" means resting, doing nothing at home or work. The point is a.) to be totally detached from The Chapel, b.) to be with my wife in a relaxed setting, c.) to have no "agenda" and listen to God's leading.*
- ☞ *Rob Record's quote, "I will not talk about you until I've first talked with you." This thing is really bothering me because I'm not doing it. I'm unsure how to handle these personnel issues at The Chapel without talking "about" other people. I think that I would say, I will not talk about this person until we can talk together concerning the personnel issue. It might be that the quote is not ment for personnel type issues but personal and private matters. Even if this is the case, I believe that I've been talking too much. Actually, this is more of a confession than an action to act upon. I suppose the action is simply to shut-up.*
- ☞ *Discipling college volunteers sometimes seems to be "non-productive." While I know and understand that I'm training them for "the work of the ministry," I also realize that this "ministry" is not just youth ministry but for a lifetime. Nevertheless, I would like it to be something that keeps the volunteers involved with the youth ministry.*

---

**Faith Issues**  
**A 9-Month Plan of Action**

---

Believing that God is leading you into an area of action regarding a revealed character issue, list out your faith-response in the action plan below.

The character issue:

✍ *Compassion / Personal evangelism*

Beginning Date: 9/94

Ending Date: 5/95

The faith action:

✍ *Go to the youth detention center to evangelize and represent the Chapel.*

The person asking about my plan and related character issue:

✍ *Foxy Denham (Mentor from the Arrow Leadership Program, Leighton Ford Ministries)*

---

Weekly I will . . .

✍ *Prepare a short simple message.*

✍ *Present the message at the detention center.*

✍ *Pray for the youth in jail.*

Monthly I will . . .

✍ *Encourage a college volunteer to join me.*

✍ *Tell Foxy about the events and the spiritual battle involved.*

✍

Quarterly I will . . .

✍ *Report to Stan, an Elder at The Chapel doing prison ministry about all that is going on.*

✍

✍

---

### Appendix D: Timeline Phases

Phase One: *Analysis of Youth Leader*

Time: *1-5 Days*

Purpose: *Review Personal Past as it Relates to Vision*

The pages that follow first explain Dr. Robert Clinton's six stages of a leader.\* They start with the "sovereign foundations" and end with the "afterglow" stage. While all six are listed, only the first three are used for the project.

Following the blank and completed forms are "process items" for that stage of a leader's life. A "process item" is defined as the "activities, people, problems -- you name it," that are brought into a leaders life in God's development of the leader."

#### Leadership Stages

*Phase 1*  
Sovereign  
Foundations

*Phase 2*  
Inner-Life  
Growth

*Phase 3*  
Ministry  
Maturing

---

*Phase 4*  
Life  
Maturing

*Phase 5*  
Convergence

*Phase 6*  
Afterglow

**Sovereign Foundations** - God providentially works through family, environment and historical events to lay foundations in our life. Our primary lesson is to learn to respond positively and take advantage of what God has laid in these foundations. BOUNDARY: Conversion to Christ or a Lordship decision.

**Inner- Life Growth** - One seeks to know God in a more personal, intimate way. The growing leader gets involved in some form of ministry . . . learning by doing and developing character. BOUNDARY: Major decision to vocational ministry.

**Ministry Maturing** - Ministry is the focus in this stage. A leader is being developed in two ways in this stage: Through ministry, the leader can identify his gifts and skills and use them with increasing effectiveness. Through relationships, he gains a better

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\* Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1992). The material was presented in the current form by Mr. Paul Stanley, Arrow Leadership Program, Leighton Ford Ministries, Section One, Charlotte, N.C., Jan. 1992, pp. 2-10.

\*\* Ibid., p. 33.



understanding of the Body of Christ. **BOUNDARY:** Shifting to a greater sphere of ministry (being fulltime in ministry focus).

**Life Maturing** - Spiritual gifts have been identified and are being used in a ministry that is satisfying. Communion with God becomes foundational; it is more important than success in ministry. Key to development during this phase is a positive response to experiences God ordains. **BOUNDARY:** Decision to minister in gift-mix.

**Convergence** - God moves the leader into a role that matches his/her gift-mix and experience so that ministry is maximized. **BOUNDARY:** Released from responsibility to a broadened ministry.

**Afterglow** - (or Celebration) The fruit of a lifetime of ministry and growth culminates in an era of recognition and indirect influence at broad levels. The storehouse of wisdom gathered over a lifetime of leadership will continue to bless and benefit many.

**SOVEREIGN FOUNDATION YEARS**  
**To be Completed**

AGE PERIOD:

MAJOR EVENTS: (Changes, experiences, decisions, relationships, successes, disappointments)

| <u>Event</u> | <u>Why significant?</u> |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1.           |                         |
| 2.           |                         |
| 3.           |                         |
| 4.           |                         |
| 5.           |                         |
| 6.           |                         |
| 7.           |                         |
| 8.           |                         |
| 9.           |                         |
| 10.          |                         |

| <u>Key People</u> | <u>Influence/Contribution</u> |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1.                |                               |
| 2.                |                               |
| 3.                |                               |
| 4.                |                               |
| 5.                |                               |
| 6.                |                               |

REFLECTION: How did these events and people (above) affect my life? (Direction, attitudes, understanding etc.) Be specific.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**SOVEREIGN FOUNDATION YEARS**  
**Completed**

AGE PERIOD: 1 to 16

MAJOR EVENTS: (Changes, experiences, decisions, relationships, successes, disappointments)

| <u>Event</u>                                  | <u>Why significant?</u>     |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Problems in reading                        | Developed persistence       |
| 2. Premarital sexual experience               | Scars of sin                |
| 3. Ninth grade science teacher                | Sensing a ability to think  |
| 4. Ninth grade athletic award                 | Some athletic ability       |
| 5. Watching the father of Christian neighbors | Involved family, a dad      |
| 6. Patience of mother                         | Giving to people / children |
| 7. Young Life Leader                          | Mentoring/ evangelism       |
| 8. Singing with high school choir teacher     | Leadership potential        |
| 9. Mowing grass                               | Responsibility/accountable  |
| 10.                                           |                             |

| <u>Key People</u>                   | <u>Influence/Contribution</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Mother's patience /dad's pushing | Parenting models              |
| 2. Science teacher                  | Loving push (potential)       |
| 3. Father of Christian neighbors    | Loving family                 |
| 4. Young Life leader                | Loving, leading, caring       |
| 5. Choir teacher                    | Leadership exposure           |
| 6. First girlfriend                 | Sexual sin                    |

REFLECTION: How did these events and people (above) affect my life? (Direction, attitudes, understanding etc.) Be specific.

1. Work and Reading = persistence (football also)
2. Sexuality = desire to be wanted and needed
3. Christian neighbor family = husband and father
4. Emerging leadership in ninth and tenth grade = leadership potential

PROCESS ITEMS  
**Inner-Life Growth (II)**

1. **Integrity Check** - A test that God uses to evaluate convictions in order to shape character. Three parts: a challenge to consistency with inner conviction, the response to the challenge and the result . . . strengthening integrity and expansion of ministry. Illustration: Daniel (Dan. 1:8-21)
2. **Obedience Check** - A test of a believer's personal response to revealed truth. A believer learns to recognize, understand and obey God's voice. A leader must learn obedience in order to influence others toward obedience. Illustration: Abraham with Isaac (Gen. 22)
3. **Word Check** - A test of a believer's ability to understand or receive a word from God personally and then allow God to work it out in life. Result: More truth revealed, greater spiritual authority and ability to clarify truth for others. Illustration: Samuel (1 Sam. 3:1-10, 19-21)

## INNER-LIFE GROWTH

### To Be Completed

Those providential events, people circumstances, special interventions and inner-life lessons that can be God's way of indicating leadership potential.

AGE PERIOD:

MAJOR EVENTS: (Changes, experiences, decisions, relationships, successes, disappointments, etc.)

|    |              |                         |
|----|--------------|-------------------------|
| A. | <u>Event</u> | <u>Why Significant?</u> |
|----|--------------|-------------------------|

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

|    |                   |                                     |
|----|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| B. | <u>Key People</u> | <u>Their Influence/Contribution</u> |
|----|-------------------|-------------------------------------|

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

C. Roles

D. Reflection: (Identify those providential events, people, circumstances, interventions and inner-life lessons that God used to develop your potential for Him.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

E. What gifts/ abilities / skills were discovered and / or developed during this period?

List process items used.

## INNER-LIFE GROWTH

### Completed

AGE PERIOD: 16 to 20-21.

MAJOR EVENTS: (Changes, experiences, decisions, relationships, successes, disappointments, etc.)

- |    |                                        |                           |
|----|----------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. | <u>Event</u>                           | <u>Why Significant?</u>   |
|    | 1. Song leading w/ Young Life          | Ministry leadership       |
|    | 2. President of Student Body           | Leadership confirmed      |
|    | 3. Martin C. in Young Life             | Early evangelism          |
|    | 4. Work at school board @ 18 yrs. old  | Leadership                |
|    | 5. Boy's State 2 yrs. in a row         | Leadership                |
|    | 6. Chapel Collegians                   | Leadership / independence |
|    | 7. Teaching Romans @ 18 yrs. old       | Desire for Bible / leader |
|    | 8. Dating Mary (later my wife)         | Biblical dating, love     |
|    | 9. Winning some money to give to needy | Power of prayer           |
- 
- |    |                                            |                                          |
|----|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| B. | <u>Key People</u>                          | <u>Their Influence/Contribute</u>        |
|    | 1. John E. / Whitney A, Young Life leaders | Giving me leadership                     |
|    | 2. Mr. S., high school principal           | Confirmation, support                    |
|    | 3. Jeff R., Young Life Area Director       | Rejection, spiritual independence        |
|    | 4. Jim S., College Pastor                  | Support, leadership., face-off           |
|    | 5. Mary Hook , wife                        | "People are more important than things." |
|    | 6. Lewis S., college friend                | Late evangelism                          |
- 
- C. Roles: Song leader, small group leader, dating leader. Moving into a more discipleship role. Chapel on the Campus college group experience more confirming than others in Young Life.
- 
- D. Reflection: (Identify those providential events, people, circumstances, interventions and inner-life lessons that God used to develop your potential for Him.)
1. Prayer: High water mark in winning money with Mary and Todd (roommate)
  2. Going to talk with Lewis S. = moved by the Holy Spirit.
  3. Leaving Young Life and St. John's Methodist Church -- taking charge of Spiritual life and direction.
  4. Dating toward purity. Wanting to give all to God with integrity.

E. What gifts/ abilities / skills were discovered and / or developed during this period?  
Song leading, relational maturity with Mary, small groups skills, a desire to convey God's truth.

List process items used.

Integrity check -- with money (Prayer)

Obedience check -- with dating and sexual purity

Word check -- going back to Lewis and telling him about Christ because I had to (also an obedience check)



## PROCESS ITEMS

### Ministry Maturing (III)

Numbers 1-3 listed un **Inner-Life Growth** process items.

4. **Ministry Task** - An assignment from God that tests a person's faithfulness and obedience to use his or her gifts in a task that has a beginning and ending, accountability and evaluation. Illustration: Barnabas (Acts 11)
5. **Ministry Challenge** - The means through which a leader or potential leader is prompted by God to sense the need for and accept a new assignment. Illustration: Paul (Acts 13)
6. **Ministry Skills** - The acquisition of one or more identifiable skills (relational, group, organizational, word, etc.) that aid one in a ministry assignment.
7. **Training Experience** - An experience that gives some form of affirmation, assuring the leader that God will continue to use him/her in the future. This is characterized by identifiable progress in terms of sphere of influence, leadership responsibility or self-confidence.
8. **Giftedness Discovery** - Any significant advance in the discovery of spiritual gifts and their use along with the event, person or reflection that brought about the discovery.
9. **Authority Insights** - God-given lessons about authority and its use in exercising influence. These lessons are on submission, authority structures, authenticity of power bases, authority conflict and how it exercises authority. Illustration: Miriam and Aaron (Numbers 12)
10. **Relation Insights** - Instances in ministry in which a leader learns either positive or negative lessons with regard to relating to other Christians or non-Christians in the light of ministry decisions. Illustration: Barnabus to Paul (Acts 13)
11. **Ministry Conflict** - Instances in ministry in which a leader learns either positive or negative lessons about the nature of conflict, possible ways to resolve conflict, possible ways to avoid conflict, ways to creatively use conflict and how to see conflict in terms of God's processing of the leader's inner life Illustration: Apostles (Acts 6)

12. **Leadership Backlash** - When followers react against a course of action taken by a leader; usually due to unforeseen complications arising after the followers have previously approved of the action. Illustration: Moses
13. **Spiritual Warfare** - A test in ministry where the leader discerns that ministry conflict is primarily supernatural in its source and essence. He depends on God's power to solve the problem in such a way that his leadership capacity, particularly his spiritual authority, is demonstrated and expanded. Illustration: Daniel (Chap. 10)
14. **Gifted Power** - A specific instance of the use of a spiritual gift in which it is clear that the Holy Spirit is channeling power in the use of the gift. The stress is on awareness of this happening and the resultant exercise by faith expecting repeated occurrence. Illustration: Agabus (Acts 11:27-28)
15. **Prayer Power** - A situation or need that is resolved or met through specific prayer, which is answered in such a way that God's power and the authenticity of the leader's spiritual authority are clearly demonstrated. Illustration: Samuel (I Sam. 12)
16. **Power Encounter** - A crisis in which there is confrontation between people representing God and people representing other supernatural forces in which the issue is power. God's credibility is at stake and is vindicated in the unusual demonstration of God's power. Illustration: Elijah (I Kings 18)
17. **Networking Power** - God's use of mentors or other mature leaders to accomplish goals for the leader, so that he senses the importance of relationships with other leaders and understands how God works through networks of people. Illustrations: Barnabus for Paul
18. **Faith Challenge** - When a leader is challenged by God to take steps of faith in ministry and sees God reward those steps with divine affirmation and ministry achievement.
19. **Prayer Challenge** - A time when God reminds the leader that he must pray in order to have effective ministry. "If God calls you to a ministry then He calls you to pray for that ministry." Illustration: Abraham (Gen. 18)
20. **Influence Challenges** - A time when a leader is prompted by God to take steps to expand leadership capacity in terms of sphere of influence. Illustration: Sending out of Paul & Barnabus

21. **Ministry Affirmation** - A special ministry assignment or experience through which God gives approval to a leader, resulting in a renewed sense of purpose of the leader. Illustration: Elijah (I Kings 19:1-16)

MAJOR EVENTS: Changes, experience, decision, relationships, successes, disappointments, etc.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

### C. Roles:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

E. What gifts / abilities /skills were discovered and or developed during this period?

List process items used.

## MINISTRY MATURING

### Completed

AGE PERIOD: 22 to present

MAJOR EVENTS: Changes, experiences, decisions, relationships, successes, disappointments, etc.)

| A. <u>Event</u>                | <u>Why Significant?</u>                                                              |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. College/seminary graduation | Academic achievement - never thought I could do it                                   |
| 2. Marriage                    | Life affecting decision                                                              |
| 3. Deciding to go to Seminary  | Deciding direction of life, focusing in on the Gospel verses, money and other things |
| 4. Adoption Monica/Stewart     | Becoming a father, trusting God with the larger issues in life                       |
| 5. Small Group leader @ FBC    | Aggressively pursued this, did well, gained respect                                  |
| 6. Young Couples Class         | Patience and something that went well. Really an introduction into ministry          |
| 7. Job at Chapel               | Beginning "vocational ministry" ordination / evangelism                              |
| 8. Summer in Haiti             | Faith venture for Mary and me -- broadening horizons seeing God's world              |

| B. <u>Key People</u>                    | <u>Their Influence/Contribution</u>                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Mary                                 | Grace, realness, giving of life and love                                            |
| 2. Steve and Darline (Pastor/Wife FBC)  | Giving me a chance and teaching = friends in the ministry - confirming the ministry |
| 3. Walt and Dottie Baker                | Loving, giving to both Mary and me, worldview of missions                           |
| 4. Donald Tabb / Sr. Pastor, The Chapel | Evangelism                                                                          |
| 5. Leighton Ford / Leighton Ford Min.   | Vision / leadership                                                                 |

C. Roles: Husband, father, small group leader, teacher, evangelist, leader

D. Reflection: (Identify those providential events, people, circumstances, interventions and inner-life lessons that God used to develop your potential for Him.)

1. Marriage = taking steps of responsibility = same with seminary
2. Summer in Haiti = Big eyes = worldview = missions
3. FBC with Steve; ministry growth and giftedness = not just paper = not wanting to administrate, young couples class, teaching
4. Adoption = being a father
5. Chapel = drawing to a close so many issues, raising of evangelism in my life; trusting and submitting to authority

E. What gifts / abilities / skills were discovered and or developed during this period?

Small group = interpersonal relationships

Teaching / evangelism (the desire if not the gift)

Leadership

List process items used.

1. Ministry Task = small groups, couples class at FBC with Steve
2. Ministry Challenge = Nursing home and caring for all souls
3. Ministry Skills = Teacher, sm. grp. couples class, evangelism at The Chapel
4. Training = small group, and couples class
5. Giftedness discovery = Steve, FBC
6. Authority Insight = Submission with Sr. Pastor at The Chapel
7. Relational Insights= Homeschoolers, Jim S., Jeff R.
8. Ministry Conflict= Homeschoolers
9. Faith Challenge = Job at Chapel

### Appendix E: Vision and Ministry

Phase One: *Analysis of Youth Leader*  
 Time: *Unlimited*  
 Purpose: *Praying and Dreaming for God's Vision for ministry.*

Praying for God's vision for your ministry takes a relaxed time of reflection and contemplation. Aubrey Malphurs suggests six guidelines in what he calls "Envisioning Prayer."

1. Do you have a daily quiet time for prayer and the study of God's Word?
2. Set aside a portion of that time to pray about your vision.
3. Ask God to give you His vision for your people.
4. Be alert to what comes into your mind during these times.
5. Also, be alert to the people and events he brings into your life.
6. Pray specifically for such things as:
  - Wisdom and insight concerning the vision
  - The people under your ministry
  - Your leadership and that of others on you team
  - The potential of your vision.<sup>2</sup>

As you spend time in prayer, write down the things that God brings to your mind and puts on your heart. As you pray, be sure to include the local church leadership. Talk with the leadership of the church and listen to what God is telling them about the direction of the church and the youth ministry.

---

#### **Vision Prayer Journal**

---

As you pray, make a list and journal in the following areas:

**People:** Who are the people and needs that God continues to put upon your heart?

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<sup>2</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21st Century (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), p. 239.



**Needs:** What needs do you feel continually motivated to meet? Bobb Biehl says, “What makes you weep or pound the table?”<sup>3</sup>

**Enjoyment:** What do you really enjoy doing? Not what do you think you should do, but what do you get the most enjoyment from?

---

<sup>3</sup> Bobb Biehl, Master Planning Arrow (Laguna Niguel, California: Masterplanning Group International, 1981).

### Appendix F: Ministry Philosophy\*

Phase One: *Analysis of Youth Leader*

Time: *Unlimited*

Purpose: *To Bring Ministry Team into an Understanding of Youth Leaders Philosophy of Ministry*

#### **Part I: Comforting Those With the Comfort We Have Received**

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

Paul opens this letter to the Corinthians by singing God's praise for the comfort that comes from God.

*"...who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." 2*

*Cor. 1:4*

Many of us in ministry are wanting to tell others about the comfort we have received in Christ. How do you receive comfort from God? Do you take it reluctantly or eagerly? Do you see yourself as self sufficient or dependent upon God's mercy?

Paul describes the comfort he gives as an overflow. In youth ministry, do you see yourself as drawing from an empty well of compassion? Is your compassion an overflow or an effort? Read Matthew 14:14.

Often when we deal with youth, compassion is the last thing we have. What are some feelings you have?

---

\* This material was worked through by volunteers in fall semester of 1994. The objective was to lay some ground work for ministry execution.

*"For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer." 2 Cor. 1:5-6*

How have you experienced the sufferings of Christ?  
Read Philippians 1:29

How have you experienced the sufferings of Christ in Youth Ministry?

What sufferings did Christ comfort you with when you were saved? That is to say, what pain (even if it was brought on by your sinful activity) did Jesus relieve when you came to him?

Do you think the above compassion could be used by God to comfort someone else or be something God uses to lead another to Christ? How?

---

*"And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort." 2 Cor. 1:7.*

Do you share your suffering? Why or why not? How is it that as Christians we can share in one another's suffering?

---

*"We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death." 2 Cor. 1:8-9a*

Suffering can be severe, but without this we can become self reliant, not God reliant.

---

*"But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us." 2 Cor. 1:9b-10*

When are you most self-reliant?

When are you the least self-reliant?

---

## **Part II: Optimism In Ministry**

Paul continues his defense to the Corinthians by pointing out that the ministry is evidence and proof of who he was as an Apostle. We'll pick this up in 2 Cor. 2:14.

Ray Stedman gives some helpful descriptions (Authentic Christianity, Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1995), pp. 28-33.

- Unquenchable Optimism "Thanks be to God! . . ."
- Unvarying Success " . . . who always leads us in triumphal procession . . ."
- Unforgettable Impact " . . . through us spreads everywhere the fragrance . . ."
- Unimpeachable Integrity " . . . we do not peddle the word of God for profit."
- Undeniable Reality "You yourselves are our letter. . ."

*"But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him." 2 Cor. 2:14*

Paul's optimism is in the face of many trials, yet he can stay "up" because he knows that God is in control.

What ministry situation do you face where things are out of control? If you could apply the New Covenant Optimism to it, how might you respond to it differently?

Take a minute and think through the ministry opportunities that God has placed in your life. When we understand that success is not based upon our actions, but upon God, “who always leads us,” we can relax.

Many understand “success” to mean numbers of people attending or how flashy a program it might be. What are some other ways that success is misunderstood or incorrectly defined?

We can relax because God is going to bring the success, but does that mean that we become lazy? Why?

---

*“For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life.” 2 Cor. 2:15-16b*

Real Christianity leaves an impact! The impact might be positive, people coming to Christ and growing in that relationship. The impact could be negative, people turning from Christ. It is an impact regardless.

Do you have a one-sided view of impact? In other words do you feel that only positive impact is real impact? Why or why not?

Because impact is assured, how might it change the way that you attempt ministry?

---

*“Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.” 2 Cor. 2:17*

As you minister to kids, your life will be reflected in them. If you are caught up in some immoral activity, the hypocrisy of your life will be passed on. That is why we work at accountability within the leadership of the volunteers at The Chapel. Real ministry will always reflect integrity.

Paul’s comment is that he is not peddling the word for profit. What are some other ways that you can sell out the word of God?

Which way are you most guilty of?

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*"Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." 2 Cor. 3:1-3.*

The reality of the Gospel is that lives are changed. In working with youth ministry, it is sometimes difficult to see those changes. As such, the ministry is a faith ministry.

Who would you like to see affected by Jesus? Write their names down.

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How has God been using you in their lives?

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### **Part III: New Covenant Motivation**

*"And who is equal to such a task?" 2 Cor. 2:16c*

*"Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God." 2 Cor. 3:4,5*

Doing ministry, literally serving, is important! What do you think qualifies you for such a task? Is it your heart (See Jer. 17:9)? Is it your ability (See Phil 3:4-11)? Is it your personality (See, 1 Cor. 1:12, 13, 31)? No, it is God who makes us competent!

When in a ministry situation is it easiest for you to trust yourself? When is it easiest to trust God?

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*"He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant--not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." 2 Cor. 3:6.*

Ministry that is defined by self-reliance usually is motivated by rules, and rules lead to frustration. (No one can keep all the rules perfectly, James 2:10) In serving, in ministry, we want to demonstrate (not hide) our inability and show God's ability!

Do you feel like you are dying or living?

Do you actively determine your relationship with Christ or does your relationship with Christ determine your activity?!

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*"Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letter as stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!" 2 Cor. 3:7-11.*

How does ministry bring death? When is it achieved if it brings death?

How does ministry bring life? When is it received if it brings life?

Write your thoughts here concerning this truth.

How are you trying to achieve, i.e. by the letter? Give some examples.

How are you receiving freedom from the Spirit? How do you take the examples and turn from achieving to receiving?

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*“Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” 2 Cor. 3:12-18.*

Because this Ministry of the New Covenant is glorious, we can be bold. It will not fade!

Moses and Ministry - He was afraid; he was hiding. You may not hide behind a veil, but what do you do to make kids or leaders think you’ve been with the Lord when you haven’t? What are your veils?

Are you tired? Are you without joy? Not functioning in the Spirit? To make it in ministry for a lifetime, which is part of my motivation behind the time with the youth ministry at The Chapel on Campus, one must be Spirit-powered!

Personal veils lead to ministry veils. That is, if you minister with veils, you will help foster veiled-faced living in kids. You will promote changed actions rather than a changed heart. You will promote performance Christianity. Can you think of a time when you encouraged or were encouraged to lived veiled-faced Christianity?

Only Jesus removes the veils! With unveiled faces, what do people see? They see we are being transformed into Jesus’ glory! Do you want people to respond to you, follow you or The Lord, reflected in/on you? One leads to death and the other leads to life.

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#### **Part IV: Power in Ministry**

If we have a ministry that doesn’t fade, then we have hope, especially in youth ministry, namely that it is worth it. If you can’t see the emerging fruit, you might lose heart.

*“Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.” 2 Cor. 4:1*



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Paul gives three reasons why we don't lose heart and hope in the ministry.

*"Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."* 2 Cor. 4:2

We should live "unveiled" before the people to whom we minister.

- we expose the secret and shameful ways that we used to live and show how Jesus has met us at each place in life.
- we trust in God and don't trust in craftiness to do ministry.
- we let God's Word stand on its own without adulterating it in any way.

Do you stand before God one way (unveiled) and the kids another (veiled)? Is there shame that is not dealt with in your life? Are you living a deceitful life in ministry? Take the issues of your life to Jesus - begin being transformed. Give God the Glory. Write down areas of your life where you need prayer - what are some things that you need to confess?

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*"And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."* 2 Cor. 4:3-4

Have you ever felt that you've done all you can to get a person to come to Christ? Maybe you've even been extremely vulnerable (totally unveiled) and nothing happened. Now we are brought to the end of ourselves and we must pray (see 2 Cor. 1:11).

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*"For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."* 2 Cor. 4:5-6

We read John 1:1-5; 3:19-21 and 1 John 1:5-10 and we see that God, not Satan is in control. We must pray for kids, families, and schools. The battle is spiritual (Eph. 6:10-12). Who are you praying for? List some kids names. What schools are you praying for? List one.

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*"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you."*

2 Cor. 4:7-12

When does confident ministry turn into ego-driven ministry? It is ego driven when we believe all this not-losing-heart ministry is from us. It is not. The purpose is to show the all-surpassing power of God. Do you pray for things that you can accomplish or for things that only God can accomplish?

Do you want kids to see your power or God's power? Does your life reflect your ability and strength or God's? How do you know? How do you change?

Paul's life could only be explained as God-empowered. How would you explain your life? Sometimes I realized that I'm holding back the pressure because I have to say, "pressed on every side and crushed." God wants to hold back the crushing blows. The pressure blows that God receives for us demonstrates to others the life of Christ. List some pressure blows you've received.

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*"It is written: 'I believed; therefore I have spoken.' With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God." 2 Cor. 4:13-15*

Are you willing to die to see the resurrection power demonstrated in your life and ministry? Resurrection power by definition can only be seen in death - i.e. Phil. 3:10.

*"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Cor. 4:16-18*

In ministry and life do you spend more time thinking and praying for the temporary or the eternal? Can you tell the difference between the two? List those areas that you are unsure of below.

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### **Part V: What Compels Us to Ministry?**

Paul continues in chapter 5 by stating that while the troubles we experience in the body are temporal they will come to an end.

*“Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” 2 Cor. 5:1-5*

The suffering we endure is to show life-swallowing death. God’s power takes our weakness and produces life. Are there any areas of your life that you would prefer over a heavenly dwelling?

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*“Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” 2 Cor. 5:6-10*

What areas are you living by faith and those which are just unseen? Vacation? Spouse? Other?

Because God is working in us, in our body, we want to please him. Obviously, we want to please him in heaven. We also want to please him because we are going to

give an account of all we do in the body! “Don’t waste your life!” Do you think Paul would say this?

Please remember, Paul is talking about rewards here, not salvation. See 1 Cor. 3:14, 9:25, 1 Thess. 2:19, 2 Tim. 4:8, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4) What would you do differently next semester in the youth ministry if you knew God would ask you about your investment?

What is worth investing in? What do you think is pleasing to God? What are some ways you could waste your life? What are you doing to prevent that?

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*“Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.” 2 Cor. 5:11-13*

Have you tried to persuade someone to come to Christ? What was it like?

What was your motivation? Was it God or man?

A changed heart is a testimony to God (see Psalm 51:10!). Changed behavior may simply be “good flesh.” We often take pride in what is seen rather than what is in the heart. When we do this, what do you think it creates in those to whom we minister? How do you promote the habit of looking at the heart rather than looking at the flesh?

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*"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again." 2 Cor. 5:14,15*

Love: this is the ultimate motivation. What has and what is the love of Christ doing in your life? Is it motivation?

Do you believe that all who die without Christ will spend an eternity apart from God? If that is true, how might it change how you invest your life, disciple people and pray?

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*"So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Cor. 5:16-17*

What is an example of regarding someone from a "worldly" point of view?

What kids do you regard this way? How can we change how we regard people and kids? (2 Cor. 5:17)

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*"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation." 2 Cor. 5:18-19*

Where does this come from? Us? The Chapel? No, all of this is from God! He gave us this ministry. He makes us competent and the fear of Him and His love for us in Christ - that motivates us! It's all from God and not from us! He committed this message to us!

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*"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Cor. 5:20-21*

We are in a joint venture with God. He wants us to make His appeal to them! He uses people like you and me. What implications does that have on your life?

The heart of the gospel is in verse 21; Christ is sinless. He becomes sin. We are sinful and we become righteous in Him. Could you explain this to an 8th grader? Could you explain it to a 10th grader? Could you explain how you've become the righteousness of God?

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#### **Part VI: Conduct and Character in Ministry**

Paul has explained the compulsions for ministry. Now he reiterates what he has stated in 2:14: "But thanks be to God . . . ." Paul starts out trying to persuade the Corinthians that this is the day of salvation.

*"As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, 'In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.' I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. 6:1-2*

Oftentimes we forget that this is the day. Today is the day many will experience salvation. Knowing this is always a possibility for God. How could it change the way that you talk with kids?

Living the New Covenant life is never done alone, it is before Christians and pre-Christians. Paul states, "We put no stumbling block in anyone's path so that the ministry, "our ministry," will not be "discredited."

*"We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited."*

The word translated “discredited” is used only here and in 8:20. It means to disgrace. Paul went to great lengths to not disgrace the ministry. How is the ministry disgraced? To what lengths have you gone to preserve the integrity of the ministry?

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*“Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way; In great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.” 2 Cor. 6:4-10*

Paul goes through a great list of what he did for the ministry so that it would not be disgraced and he would be commended to God as a servant. Ray Stedman outlines the list in a way that better explains what Paul means. [Ray Stedman, Authentic Christianity, p.175. Also see The Cambridge Bible for Schools & Colleges. II Corinthians, ed. A Plummer, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), pp. 58-61.]

Through great endurance:

in afflictions  
in hardships  
in calamities

in beatings  
in imprisonment  
in tumults

in labors  
in watching  
in hunger



By means of:

purity  
knowledge  
forbearance  
kindness

the Holy Spirit  
genuine love  
truthful speech  
the power of God

With the weapons of righteousness:

for the right hand and the left  
in honor and dishonor  
in ill repute and good repute

Stedman goes on to state, “. . . the first group deals with the adverse pressures which a Christian can encounter in life . . . the second group describes the character that must be displayed in the midst of these pressures . . . the third group deals with the results produced, both good and apparently evil.”

To get an idea of what Paul endured as afflictions, hardships, and calamities, read 2 Cor. 11:22-33. What have you endured as a minister of the New Covenant? I find that I'm unwilling to put myself in a situation where afflictions might occur. What about you? Where might they occur in youth ministry?

Paul was beaten -- whipped, that is -- and imprisoned for his preaching. The power of the Gospel also can bring about such social change that riots ensue (See Acts 19 especially vv. 26-29). Wow! Have you ever been a part of a riotous atmosphere because of what God was doing?

Paul's next three phrases are “hard work, sleepless nights, and hunger.” Hard work -- Paul was trying to PERSUADE men (2 Cor. 5:11). He wanted his life to count. He worked at it -- hard. Sleepless nights in prayer, and fasting (NIV hunger). To what

lengths have you gone to persuade a friend or a kid to come to Christ? Have you fasted or prayed for them? Who are they? Who would you like to fast and pray for? Write down their names.

How did Paul live under such hardship? Did he snap at people or say, "You're going to hell, well fine -YOU DESERVE IT!" No . . .

Paul was pure and understanding in his dealings with people. He functioned with patience and kindness (Fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22)

How did Paul endure? Did he resolve -- was it an act of the will? No! This ministry - - "All of this is from God!" (2 Cor. 5:18) The next words tell us the power for his "great endurance." His actions were in the Holy Spirit and the power of God. Wow! Not only were his actions pure, his speech was truthful and his love was real. This has to come from God. When was the last time that you were trying to love a kid and you had to be a fake? We must go back to God, for when we resolve to DO IT, JUST DO IT, we fail. What areas in your life would you like God to empower? List them.

When we are empowered, competent ministers of the New Covenant, what are the results as we live out our lives before men?

Our lives are armed with weapons of righteousness for the offense (right) and defense (left). Some have suggested that this means our public and private lives are the same. There is no hypocrisy in our lives. If there was hypocrisy in Paul's life, he could not have endured all that he did.

Finally - we are likely to be misunderstood. Have you ever called a kid just to be asked by the parents who you were and why you were calling their child? As ministers, you might be treated with honor or contempt; it might be an advantage for you or work to your disadvantage. Even if the world doesn't know you, God does. Therefore we can rejoice and be sorrowful, enriched while having nothing.

*"We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. As a fair exchange -- I speak as to my children -- open wide our hearts also." 2 Cor. 6:11-13*

Paul's final appeal - "open wide your hearts also." Let's get with it!

Dr. Lloyd-Jones says,

I speak especially to those of us who are Evangelicals. We must not continue with our religious life and methods precisely as if nothing were happening round and about us, and as if we were still living in the spacious days of peace. We have loved certain methods. And how delightful they were! What could be more enjoyable than to have and to enjoy our religion in the form with which we have for so long been familiar? How enjoyable just to sit and listen. What an intellectual and perhaps also emotional and artistic treat.

But alas! How entirely unrelated to the world in which we live it has often been! How little has it had to offer to men and women who have never known our background and our kind of life, who are entirely ignorant of our very idiom and even our presuppositions. But in any case how detached and self-contained, how removed from a world that is seething in trouble with the foundations of everything that has been most highly prized rocking and shaking.

[Lloyd-Jones, quoted in Stedman, Authentic Christianity, p. 183.]

### Appendix G: Vision Statement

Phase One: *Analysis of Youth Leader*

Time: *Unlimited*

Purpose: *Write and Begin to Communicate a Vision for Ministry*

#### Resulting vision statement for youth ministry at The Chapel on the Campus

##### Youth Ministry at The Chapel on the Campus

**Exposing Kids to Christ**  
**Establishing Kids in Christ**  
**Equipping Kids for Christ**

*We have a vision for a ministry motivated by evangelism, providing occasions for kids to grow in their knowledge of Christ, and opportunities to express their emerging faith in and through relationships and events. Our prayer is to expose kids to a relationship with Christ, establish them in that relationship, and equip them to reach others for Christ.*

**Evangelistically motivated** Christ left his followers a commission to make disciples, to expose people to Christ. This is God's heart and the heart of His Church. Therefore, it is essential that we make this the focus and thrust of the ministry to the youth. As they step into adulthood, they must understand this basic truth of Christianity. Otherwise, we run the risk of passing on a "folk religion," not Christianity.

**Grow in knowledge of Christ** A major effort of the youth ministry is to educate the kids. We want them to understand and build a working base knowledge of the Bible that they can expand on as they grow. Additionally, this knowledge should aid them in their Christian faith and as they talk with seeking friends. This is accomplished through Sunday school classes and especially small groups.

**Express their emerging faith** The youth ministry seeks to provide safe and challenging areas, events and relationships for the kids to express their faith. These events could be mission trips, evangelistic meetings, leading worship, or various leadership roles.

**In and through relationships** The major method for this ministry is relational evangelism and discipleship. Additionally, through small groups and evangelistic outreaches the relationships with kids are deepened. The relationships with youth volunteers is an avenue God has used most powerfully to mold lives of kids into the image of his Son. Therefore, the recruitment and training of college volunteers is a major emphasis of the ministry. Relationships between kids and these volunteers are

often the relationships that God uses to change the lives of kids who do not know Jesus or are not growing in their faith.

**Expose . . . establish . . . equip** Because kids come and go in a youth group and are at various places in their spiritual journey, it is important that we start where they are and move them to the next stage in their growth. Additionally, at each cluster level (5th & 6th, 7th & 8th, 9th -12th) there will be kids needing to be exposed to Christ, established in him and equipped for ministry. Therefore, we must be looking for kids at every level, in every place along their journey.

Appendix H: Adjustments in the Ministry

Phase One: *Analysis of Youth Leader*

Time: *Unlimited*

Purpose: *Gain an Understanding of the Church Leadership's View of Ministry*

**Questions for Elders**

The Elder Board is the governing board for The Chapel on the Campus. These questions could be given to any ruling body of a local church.

1. Please write down what you consider the primary purpose of youth ministry at The Chapel on the Campus.

2. Please read the attached statement from the youth ministry. After reading the vision statement given to you by the Youth Ministry, do you have any major objections? Please list them.

3. Is there anything that is not represented in the statement that you believe the Lord would have us include for the youth ministry at The Chapel on the Campus? Please write it down.

4. Is there any area of the statement that you would reword for precision and clarity? Please write down those changes.

5. Are there any areas that you would like explained more fully? What are they? When would you like to get together to discuss the areas? Would you like to do it alone or during a regular elders' meeting?

### Appendix I: Defining All Ministry Programs

Phase Two: *Adjustments of the Youth Ministry in Light of Ministry Focus*

Time: *Unlimited*

Purpose: *Clearly Define All Existing Programs in Youth Ministry*

#### **Example: Areas of Ministry in the Youth Ministry at The Chapel on the Campus**

Sunday School also called S.A.M. (Sunday A.M.)

**5th and 6th** Goals: Christian education is the goal because the youth are still very open to learning facts of the Bible. There may be some exposure to Christ. There will be much pre-establishing and establishing at this age.

**7th and 8th** Goals: The main tasks at this age are to expose and establish. Much of the establishment will be keeping them interested in Christ through relationships, fun, and meaningful events.

**9th - 12th** Goals: The main task here is establishment through interesting and interactive discussion led by volunteers. There may also be opportunities to expose kids to Jesus through creative and challenging presentations of the gospel.

Mid-Week Meetings

**R-U-M-B-L-E**(5th/6th Sun. Night) Goals: Fun! A preview of youth experiences moving out of childhood. There is exposure because of the nature of the meetings, and some establishing.

**HUDDLE**(7th/8th Wed. Night) Goals: Fun! This is a great time for exposing Christ to kids as they bring their friends. Once a month we have a Home Meeting with dinner, music, and a pertinent video. The kids have responded well to these messages. They love meeting outside the church on occasion.

**Solid Rock!** (Sr. High Wed. Night) Goals: Because of the crowd, there is exposing first with opportunities to establish them to the Lord. There are times for equipping, though they are not that often.

Types of Small Groups (Jr. and Sr. Highers)

**Evangelistic** Goal: Because the group may be made up of marginal Christians, it is important that the main effort of this group is exposure to the Savior.



**Caring Goals:** Some groups are designed to be a place of caring and sharing. Basically what is going on in these groups is establishing their relationship with Christ by providing fellowship and scriptural guidance. There may be some occasion for equipping in a group like this.

**Discipleship Goals:** The main task of this group is equipping. There will need to be some re-establishing, as it were, at times. But the overall goal is to move kids into sharing their faith with their friends.

### Prayer Ministry

This is being developed. The main goal is to get others outside and inside the youth ministry to pray about the spiritual battles that are going on with staff, volunteers and the youth involved in ministry. It is important that this be a far-reaching ministry.

### Mission Outreach

This is an ongoing community outreach designed to help junior. and senior. high kids become more established and begin to think about others besides their immediate peers and family (equipping). The junior high mission group is called M\*A\*S\*H which stands for Mastering A Servant's Heart. (They are excited about the projects they will be doing seeking prayer that God will open their hearts to the Gospel.)

### Home Meetings

In addition, the 7th/8th and 9th-12 graders have home meetings. This is an intimate time of sharing and instruction designed to establish and equip junior high students to share their faith.

As an evangelistic event (starting in spring 1995) the senior high group will have five home meetings a year. These meeting will be called ***Solid Rock! on The Road!*** The meetings will be at kids' homes who attend certain schools that the youth ministry is trying to reach. For example, if John Doe goes to Baton Rouge High School, we would have a meeting at his house with the purpose of exposure at that school. It would be ***Solid Rock! on the Road!: Baton Rouge High Night.***

### Day/Weekend Trips

These include retreats (open to all youth), lock-ins, etc. Their main purpose is to build unity through fellowship. Because these events often draw in “fringe” kids, this is both an exposure and establishing event. Some examples of these events are The Blizzard Blast, Polar Bear Overnighter, Kueta-T Retreats, Tunica Hills, Lake Catherine Spring Trip, etc.

### Summer Trip

Summer trips are mostly designed to establish and equip the kids in their relationship with Christ. Depending on the trip (Sr. High) there might be opportunities to minister/serve.

### Small Group Retreats

The junior. high and senior. small groups take an annual trip to Florida and Arkansas respectfully. The purpose is to establish the students in their walk with Christ.

### Campus Ministry

McKinley Middle Young Life Club: This is going to where the kids live and is designed mostly for junior high. Going to schools gives the volunteers a fresh look at the kid’s world. Additionally, it is a seeking ministry. Therefore, it is for exposing them to Christ and establishing them through volunteer/kid relationships. The Young Life Club combines skits, music, a message, and games once a month.

Collegiate volunteers in the ministry have joined us in visiting campuses during their lunch hour. The kids enjoy talking and meeting the volunteers on their turf.

### Evangelistic Event

This is a special event on the senior and junior. high levels that is designed especially for exposing kids to Christ. Because it is designed to be run with and through kids, it is also an equipping ministry function. These events demand prayer, thought, and understanding on the part of the church kids. *Campus Rock!* has been an action-packed outreach with skits, bands, games, food, and a pertinent message.

Appendix J: Addition and Elimination to Ministry Programs

Phase Two: *Adjustments of the Youth Ministry in Light of Ministry Focus*

Time: *Unlimited*

Purpose: *Be Aware of How Changes will Affect Others*

**Permanently Moving a Programmed Event  
Changing the Day, Time or Meeting Place of an Event**

In the course of the analysis of the programs and how they fit into the overall primary purpose of the ministry, (vision), it might be determined that a programmed event should be moved in order for it to better accomplish the purpose for which it is designed. Consider the following questions before moving an event.

1. As a youth leader, does your schedule allow for the projected move? Will it demand more than you are capable of giving at this time? Can the move be postponed?
  
2. If there are volunteers associated with the event, can they “move” their involvement along with the movement of the event? In other words, can they still be involved if the event is moved? If not, is it worth the cost of losing their involvement? Will you be able to replace them some other way?
  
3. Is there any cost in moving the event? If there is, has there been provision made for such a cost? If additional money or approval is needed, have you talked with the necessary people? Does obtaining the additional money or approval mean that the changes might have to be delayed? What effects, if any, will that have on the proposed changes?
  
4. Feeling led by God to make the changes, how will it affect the youth associated with the current program? How is the change going to be communicated to those involved in

the existing program? Have the forthcoming objections been thought through so that they can be handled in a loving and godly way?

5. If you are in a multi-staffed church, there are likely many other programs going on. Do the proposed changes in this event conflict with any other ministries in the church? If so, how are you dealing with the possible conflict? If the change comes down to your programmed event over an event of a different ministry, how is the decision going to be made?

6. Has the leadership of the church been notified? Are they in agreement with the changes? Are they aware of the possible effects this change will have on the other ministry programs in the church? Are they comfortable with, and supportive of, possible difficulties?

Appendix K: Understanding Ministry Structures

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This was reproduced to show how it is used. (Columns line up number 4 through 11, then end with the focus, columns 3, 2, and 1. Therefore, in the reproduction columns 3, 2, 1 are listed first as the focus.)

|                            | 3. <u>Objectives</u> In what 3-7 area will we continue being actively involved in the future? (Broad categories, non-measurable, continuous.)                     | 2. <u>Purpose</u> Why do we exist?                                                                      | 1. <u>Needs</u> What needs do we feel deeply burdened by and uniquely qualified to meet? |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Exposure / Evangelism      | EXPOSE KIDS TO CHRIST<br>Evangelism<br>Campus Rock!<br>Huddle, Rumble<br>Solid Rock!                                                                              | EXPOSE KIDS TO CHRIST<br>through evangelism by means of relationships, confrontation, and proclamation. | Evangelism of the lost                                                                   |
| Establishing Christian Ed. | ESTABLISHING KIDS IN CHRIST<br>SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ALL GRADES                                                                                                       | ESTABLISH KIDS IN CHRIST by caring and discipleship                                                     | Fighting apathy in youth for next generation                                             |
| Equipping Discipleship     | EQUIPPING KIDS FOR CHRIST through Discipleship, small groups and leadership development                                                                           | EQUIPPING KIDS FOR CHRIST by providing small groups and a chance for kids to share their faith.         | Giving kids a chance to express their faith                                              |
| Touch Relationship         | Continue to build relationships<br>Campus ministry, social events and one on one contact.                                                                         | RELATIONSHIPS                                                                                           | Relationships with Christians and non-Christians                                         |
| Parents / Family           | Family support                                                                                                                                                    | Supporting families                                                                                     | Parental support                                                                         |
| Leadership Development     | Continue developing youth and adult leaders by studying with College guys, and weekly meetings with College Volunteers. Exposure to leadership for upper classman | DEVELOPING STUDENT LEADERS both College kids High school kids                                           | Student and adult leadership                                                             |
| Prayer                     | Continue praying for kids and with kids                                                                                                                           | PRAYER                                                                                                  | Revival among the church, kids who are going through the motions                         |
| Service                    | Continue to provide service projects.                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                         |                                                                                          |

|                            | 4. <u>Milestones</u><br>What major milestones have we already accomplished?                                                                                             | 5. <u>Ideas</u><br>What ideas have we had that we should consider turning into goals in the future? | 6. <u>Roadblocks</u><br>What is keeping us from reaching our full potential? | 7. <u>Resources</u><br>What are our greatest resources? |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Exposure Evangelism        | 8.92 Adding Rumble<br>6.92 New format for Huddle.<br>3.93 Campus Rock!! in Maringouin, La.<br>4.93 Campus Rock!<br>2.95 Solid Rock!<br>Home meeting<br>9.94 Volunteers! | Drama<br>Video                                                                                      | Programming<br>Prayer<br>Training volunteer                                  | Facility<br>Sound equipment<br>Multimedia               |
| Establishing Christian Ed. | 8.92 Re-clustered<br>8.92 Curriculum, new for 5th and 6th<br>2.94 2nd floor all youth                                                                                   | Drama                                                                                               | Training teachers well                                                       | Curriculum<br>Facility                                  |
| Equipping Discipleship     | 6.92 Jr. High Boy / Girl small group<br>2.93 Small Group trip to Arkansas<br>8.94 5 Small groups in Sr. Hi.                                                             | Sr. High leading Jr. High                                                                           | Scheduling<br>Training Small group leaders                                   | Material                                                |
| Touch Relationships        | 8.92 Start Campus ministry<br>3.93 U-High breakfast<br>12.94 McKinley High Campus<br>94 McKinley Jr. Young Life                                                         |                                                                                                     | Getting volunteers to do contact work on campus.<br><br>Closed campus        | Access to Campus                                        |
| Parent Family              | 9.93 Jeff providing family video<br>'93 Family drive-in movie night                                                                                                     |                                                                                                     | Apathy, timing and scheduling                                                | Materials, counselors, facilities                       |
| Leadership Development     | 6.92 Jr. Worker<br>8.92 Secretary<br>6.93 College meeting weekly                                                                                                        |                                                                                                     | Training strategy, commitment scheduling                                     | Intern program                                          |
| Prayer                     | 2.993 Prayer booklet                                                                                                                                                    | City wide prayer with pastors                                                                       | People don't pray                                                            | Prayer booklet and church's prayer ministry             |
| Service                    | '92 W. Virginia mission trip                                                                                                                                            | Thinking locally in N. BTR                                                                          | Apathy in church and kids                                                    | Missions committee                                      |

|                               | <u>8. Quarterly Goals</u><br>In the next 90 days<br>what are our specific<br>measurable targets of<br>accomplishment? | <u>9. Short-Range Goals</u><br>In the next 0-2 years<br>what are our specific<br>measurable targets of<br>accomplishment? | <u>10. Mid-Range Goals</u><br>In the next 2-5 years,<br>what are our possible<br>targets of accomplish-<br>ment? | <u>11. Long-Range Goals</u><br>In the next 5-20 years,<br>what are we dreaming<br>of accomplishing? |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Exposure<br>Evangelism        | Plan Home meetings<br>Solid Rock!                                                                                     | More evangelism in<br>Sunday schools                                                                                      |                                                                                                                  | Having 2 Solid Rock!<br>meetings at same time.<br>city-wide outreach                                |
| Establishing<br>Christian Ed. | Day Away with Jr.<br>High                                                                                             |                                                                                                                           | Having an upper class<br>(11-12) Sunday school                                                                   | Add third floor of<br>church for youth                                                              |
| Equipping<br>Discipleship     | Lake Katherine trip                                                                                                   | 4 groups Jr. High<br>7-8 groups Sr. High                                                                                  |                                                                                                                  | Kids in small group.<br>leading Jr. High.                                                           |
| Touch<br>Relationships        |                                                                                                                       | Four Volunteers doing<br>contact work in Sr.<br>High., 2 in Jr.                                                           |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                     |
| Parent<br>Family              |                                                                                                                       | One day conference<br>Parents and kids                                                                                    | Material for adult<br>small group                                                                                |                                                                                                     |
| Leadership<br>Development     |                                                                                                                       | Summer trip with<br>college team                                                                                          | Leadership training<br>program disciple-ship<br>one year.                                                        |                                                                                                     |
| Prayer                        | Day of Prayer                                                                                                         | Roster of 20 people<br>praying                                                                                            | 40 people praying for<br>family and school                                                                       | 100 people praying                                                                                  |
| Service                       | Mission trip '95                                                                                                      | Local service project<br>with Sr. and Jr. High.                                                                           | Local mission for Sr.<br>high                                                                                    | A volunteer running<br>youth service                                                                |

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